



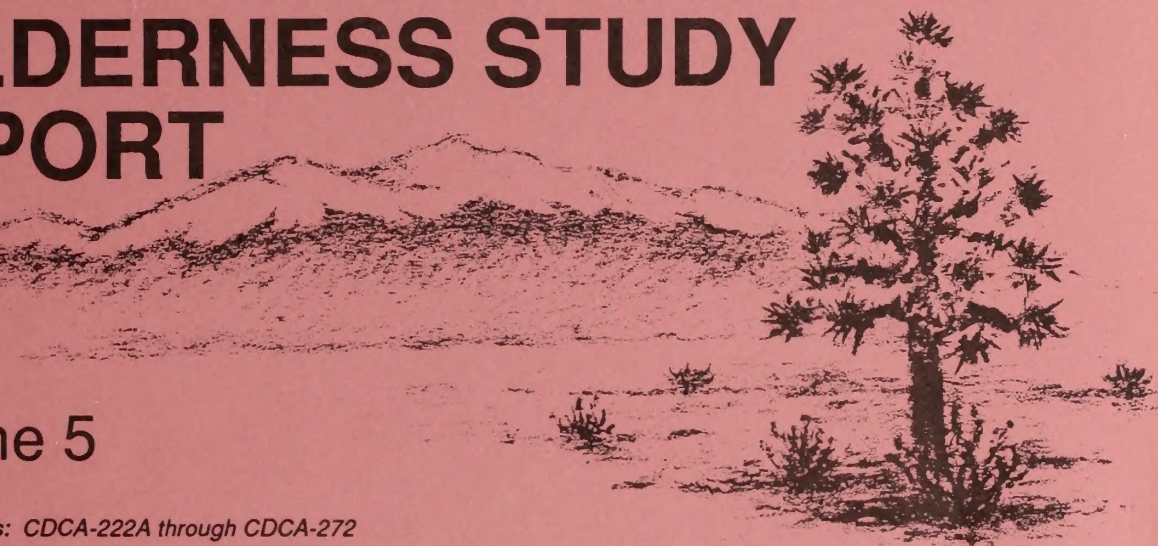
Bureau of Land Management

CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT

1990

Part 4

Volume 5

*Contains WSA's: CDCA-222A through CDCA-272***Silurian Valley**
CDCA-222A**North Mesquite Mountain**
CDCA-223**Mesquite Mountains**
CDCA-225**Stateline**
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CDCA-267**Table Mountain**
CDCA-270**Woods Mountains**
CDCA-271**Signal Hill**
CDCA-272

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Supplemental information to these reports includes Environmental Documents, Mineral Survey Reports, and maps. To review these supplemental data, or to obtain additional information, please contact:

*Bureau of Land Management
Branch of Wilderness Resources
Room 3360
Main Interior Building
18th and C Streets
Washington, D.C. 20002*

(202) 208-6064

or

*Bureau of Land Management
Branch of Lands and Recreation
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Silurian Valley

CDCA 222A

SILURIAN VALLEY WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-222A)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 19,435 acres

The Silurian Valley WSA is located in San Bernardino County within the north central portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The community of Baker is 12 road miles to the south. The WSA includes 18,318 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 632 acres owned by the State of California, and 485 acres of private land (see Map 1 and Table 1).

This triangular-shaped WSA is bounded on the west by State Route 127. The north and northeastern boundaries are gravel roads used to access the patented Silver Lake Mine properties. The southeastern boundary consists of a gravel road used to access other patented mining properties. The southern boundary is located along an imaginary line 400 feet north of three high voltage power transmission lines which were in place in 1979, except where the service road extends beyond the 400 feet and then the boundary is the service road. These power lines, and portions of the WSA, are located within a utility corridor designated in the CDCA Plan that is two miles in width.

The WSA consists predominately of a creosote covered bajada that slopes west toward the Amargosa River drainage. The southeastern portion of the WSA contains rocky, rolling hills. The Riggs Wash drains through the northeast portion of the area. The WSA contains approximately 75% alluvial fans, 20% hills, and 5% pediments. The topography ranges from 700 to 2250 feet in elevation.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 0 acres recommended for wilderness
18,318 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Silurian Valley WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. Future activities in the area will be controlled by moderate intensity, multiple use management guidelines as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The general lack of quality wilderness values was the primary reason for the nonsuitable recommendation. If designated, this area would come nowhere close to meeting the caliber of other wilderness areas already within the National Wilderness Preservation System. Existing and potential motorized recreation use and the need to keep the land available for expansion of a designated utility corridor also influenced the nonsuitable recommendation. Designation of the area as wilderness would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). Other WSAs in the California Desert that are recommended suitable offer a much more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values.

The scenic values of the area are unpretentious. The area is lacking in variety of landform, color, and vegetation and has no unique features. An abandoned railroad grade divides the area into two distinct units. Opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation are available, but primarily in the small hilly region in the southern portion of the area. There are approximately eight miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

The wildlife and vegetative resources within the area are typical of the surrounding desert. The vegetative composition includes the typical creosote bush scrub assemblage that may be interrupted by saltbush at the lower elevations. The area contains no unusual plants or State or Federally listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species. There are no significant cultural resource values or Native American concerns.

The California Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Draft Statewide Motorized Trails System Plan indicates that a portion of the bajada within the WSA could be included in a statewide trails system. Current recreational use in the WSA consists of motorized vehicle travel adjacent to an abandoned railroad grade. The WSA itself is not a destination point, but rather contains portions of a north-south link for OHV travel. Although current use levels are considered low, the potentials for increase are high.

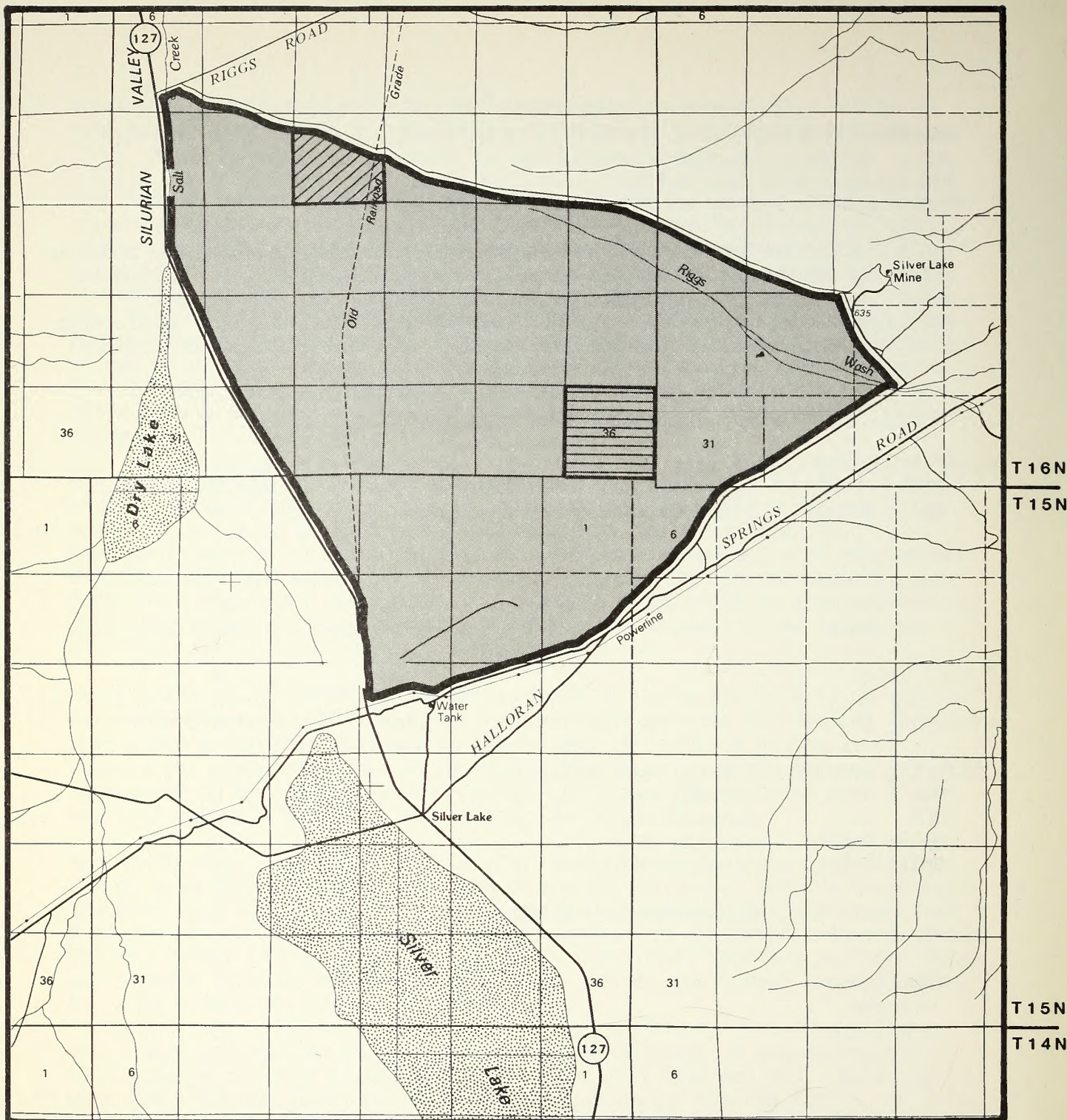
Wilderness designation would prohibit full development of the energy and transmission corridor identified in the 1980 CDCA Plan and EIS. This two-mile wide corridor overlaps the southern boundary of the WSA for approximately one mile and the southeastern boundary to a lesser degree. This corridor, along with others in the CDCA, were designated to accommodate the long-term energy and communication needs of the southwestern United States. Depending upon the juxtaposition of the WSAs ultimately designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may or may not be constraints to full development of such corridors.




The mineral potential of the WSA is largely unknown due to lack of field data. However, the area's boundaries are directly adjacent to known mineralized locations and past producing mines. In addition, 2,660 acres of the WSA are currently encumbered with 67 mining claims.


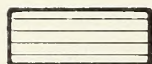
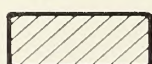
The WSA would be best managed and maintained under nonwilderness and moderate intensity management guidelines as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. Mining and motorized recreational pursuits would be allowed to continue without sacrifice of desert resource values. Future scenarios regarding development of energy and communication corridor in this area would not be constrained.

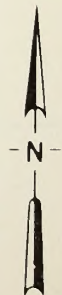
TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	18,318
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		632
Private		485
Total		<u>19,435</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	18,318
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>18,318</u>



- | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|
|  | NONE | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS | |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS | |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
|  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | STATE |
|  | PRIVATE |



**Silurian Valley
Proposal
MAP-1**

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-222A
JUNE, 1988

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Portions of the area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. One of the exceptions is a two mile route to an abandoned mining tunnel in the southwest corner of the area. Two branches of the abandoned Tonopah-Tidewater Railroad are also within the WSA. One railroad grade lies adjacent to State Route 127 and approximates the western border of the WSA. Due to the forces of nature, this railroad grade blends into the surrounding terrain. The other grade runs north-south through the west-central portion of the area, is elevated from the surrounding bajada, and is substantially noticeable throughout the WSA. All track has been removed from both grades but some old railroad ties remain.
2. Solitude: The best opportunities for solitude are available in the small hilly portion of the WSA. In the western and southern portion of the WSA, the hum of the power transmission lines and traffic noise from the adjacent highway, negatively impact opportunities for solitude. Elsewhere, opportunities are limited due to lack of vegetative or topographic screening.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The area does provide for unconfined movement and primitive types of recreation due to the extensive bajada and rolling hills. However, the abandoned railroad grades do have a limiting affect.
4. Special Features: There are no special features. The landforms, ecological diversity, and geological features are not unusual, they are typical of features common throughout the surrounding deserts and mountains.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The Silurian Valley WSA contains 18,318 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush (Larrea) ecosystem. This ecosystem is well represented in other WSAs in the CDCA that are recommended suitable for wilderness designation. The WSA would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,249,591
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,635,787

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of eight major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of ten BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Joshua Tree Wilderness, administered by Joshua Tree National Monument, 90 miles south of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Silurian Valley WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, the additional effort that would be necessary to manage the area for wilderness is not justified given the overall void of quality wilderness values.

Mineral and/or surface development of the private inholdings has the potential to adversely impact the majority of the area. Visual screening of such activities would be virtually nonexistent due to a lack of vegetation and topographic screening. Access requirements for such developments would result in similar impacts.

Mineral rights would have to be acquired on all valid mining claims to insure manageability of the WSA. Sixty-seven mining claims encumber 2,660 acres of the area. The likelihood for valid mineral rights and/or a major discovery is largely unknown. The WSA contains only low mineral potential.

The efforts required to redirect traditional vehicle-dependant recreationists is considered to be significant. Several generations of users have utilized portions of the WSA for north-south OHV travel.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Silurian Valley WSA is located in the BLM Halloran Geology-Energy-Mineral (GEM) Resource Area (GRA). BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness portion of the Desert Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) indicated in 1980 that the northwestern part of the WSA had been classified by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) as being prospectively valuable for oil, gas, and sodium minerals. No development of these resources had occurred in the WSA. The eastern, rocky part of the WSA was found to have potential for gold and copper in both Precambrian metasediments and Mesozoic intrusive rocks. The draft Halloran GRA report assessed the Precambrian rocks in the southern portion of the WSA as a favorable environment (BLM low potential classification) for talc, limestone, dolomite and silica. In the GRA, the metallic mineral potential for the WSA was largely unknown and classified as unqualified in the northern portion of the WSA based on insufficient data. The southern portion of the WSA was classified as having a low potential for occurrence of metallic mineral resources. There was no mineral production reported and the mining history of the area was unknown. Only large-scale regional mapping (1:250,000) of the geology has been completed for this WSA by the California Division of Mines and Geology.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No USGS or Bureau of Mines mineral survey was completed for this WSA because the WSA is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. The only new data available since the wilderness recommendations were made is located in the publication of the 1983 USGS provisional topographic map edition of the North of Baker 7.5' quadrangle map. This map shows a shaft, two adits and four other prospects, not shown on the old 1956 Baker 15' quadrangle.

No mineral resource potential map was prepared for this report because there are no moderate or high mineral potentials within the WSA.

Unpatented mining claims in the WSA are summarized in the following table taken from BIM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	1	1	N/A	20	20
Placer	N/A	66	66	N/A	2,640	2,640
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	67	67	N/A	2,660	2,660

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Noise, surface disturbance and access requirements for mineral exploration and development will negatively impact naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The mineral potential of the area is largely unknown and any development will primarily affect site-specific areas. Any development and use of a portion of the WSA as part of a statewide OHV trail network will also adversely impact wilderness values.
2. Impact on Off Highway Vehicle Recreation Opportunities: There will be beneficial impacts to recreational vehicle travel by not designating the area as wilderness. Planning and development of the statewide OHV trails system will not be constrained.
3. Impact on Minerals: Opportunities for exploration and development of minerals will continue to be available subject to applicable laws, regulations and the moderate intensity, multiple use management guidelines established in the CDCA Plan.
4. Impact on use of Utility and Communication Corridor: Opportunities for full development and use of the designated corridor will not be constrained.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: No comments were received.
2. Study Phase: No comments were received in response to the workbook.
3. Draft Plan Alternatives: Few of the public comments received were specific to this WSA. However, this WSA was one of many which were opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons or letters supporting this general position. Conservation groups and their supporters took the opposite position and generally wanted wilderness designation for the majority of the WSAs. In addition, there were a few letters wanting the desert left open for mineral, oil and gas, and geothermal exploration and development.
4. Proposed Plan: Few comments were received which were specific to WSA 222A. Conservation and motorized vehicle oriented groups maintained the same positions as for the Draft Plan Alternatives.

No comments were received from local governments.

North Mesquite Mountain

CDCA 223

NORTH MESQUITE MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-223)

1. THE STUDY AREA — 29,020 acres

The North Mesquite Mountains WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 28,124 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and 896 acres of land belonging to the State of California. No private inholdings or split-estate land exist within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The WSA is roughly triangular in shape. Its boundaries are formed by an unnamed jeep trail on the north, Excelsior Mine Road on the west and Kingston Road on the east. The eastern and western boundaries meet to form the southern point in the WSA. The WSA contains 11 miles of cherrystemmed routes which were removed from the WSA boundary to exclude mining scars.

The study area encompasses the northern portion of the Mesquite Mountains proper and contains 45% hills, 50% alluvial fans, 3% pediments and 2% river washes. Rolling brown foothills with a few steeper mountains comprise the major reddish-brown geologic features in the eastern portion of the WSA. The eastern half is characterized by a cluster of mountains and medium-sized buttes. A wide horseshoe-shaped valley skirts these mountains in the northern portion of the WSA.

The vegetation of the study area is characteristic of the mid elevations of the eastern Mojave Desert. Dominant vegetation includes creosote bush scrub, blackbrush, Joshua tree woodland, yucca, cactus and some grasses. No Federal or State listed rare, threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species exist within the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE — 0 acres recommended for wilderness 28,124 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the North Mesquite Mountains WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The nonsuitable recommendation is based on marginal wilderness values and known mineral potential. The addition of the North Mesquite Mountains to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) would not add to the diversity or uniqueness of the system, nor would it add significantly to the wilderness recreational opportunities available in the region. These factors, combined with the fact that this WSA has only marginal wilderness values, led to the nonwilderness recommendation.

The landform and ecosystem exhibited by the study area are already well represented in other areas identified for wilderness preservation. Three nearby WSAs, Kingston Mountains, one-half mile west; Nopah Mountains, 25 miles north; and Castle Peaks, 40 miles southeast contain a combined total of over 120,000 acres which BLM is recommending for wilderness designation. All are mountainous, and all contain examples of the same type of ecosystems and landforms found in the North Mesquite Mountains.

Extensive portions of the WSA show a moderate potential for the occurrence of uncommon varieties of nonmetallic minerals such as quartzite, limestone and dolomite. Barite, used as a pigment substance for X-rays in medical photography, occurs in the central portion of the WSA. A moderate potential exists for silica deposits.

A strip of land adjacent to the northern boundary shows potential for sand and gravel. This area is currently utilized by the county and local contractors for road maintenance and building materials. Extraction of sand and gravel may prove to be critical in the long term for the resurfacing of Interstate 15 which lies 14 miles south of the WSA boundary. Existing reserves are being depleted and the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) is actively searching for quality material sites that are within an economical hauling distance from the freeway.

The WSA includes portions of the Horsethief Springs and Valley Wells Grazing Allotments. Allotment management plans (AMPs) completed for each grazing lease describe the grazing system to be followed and outlines actions taken to improve range conditions and minimize conflicts with other resources.

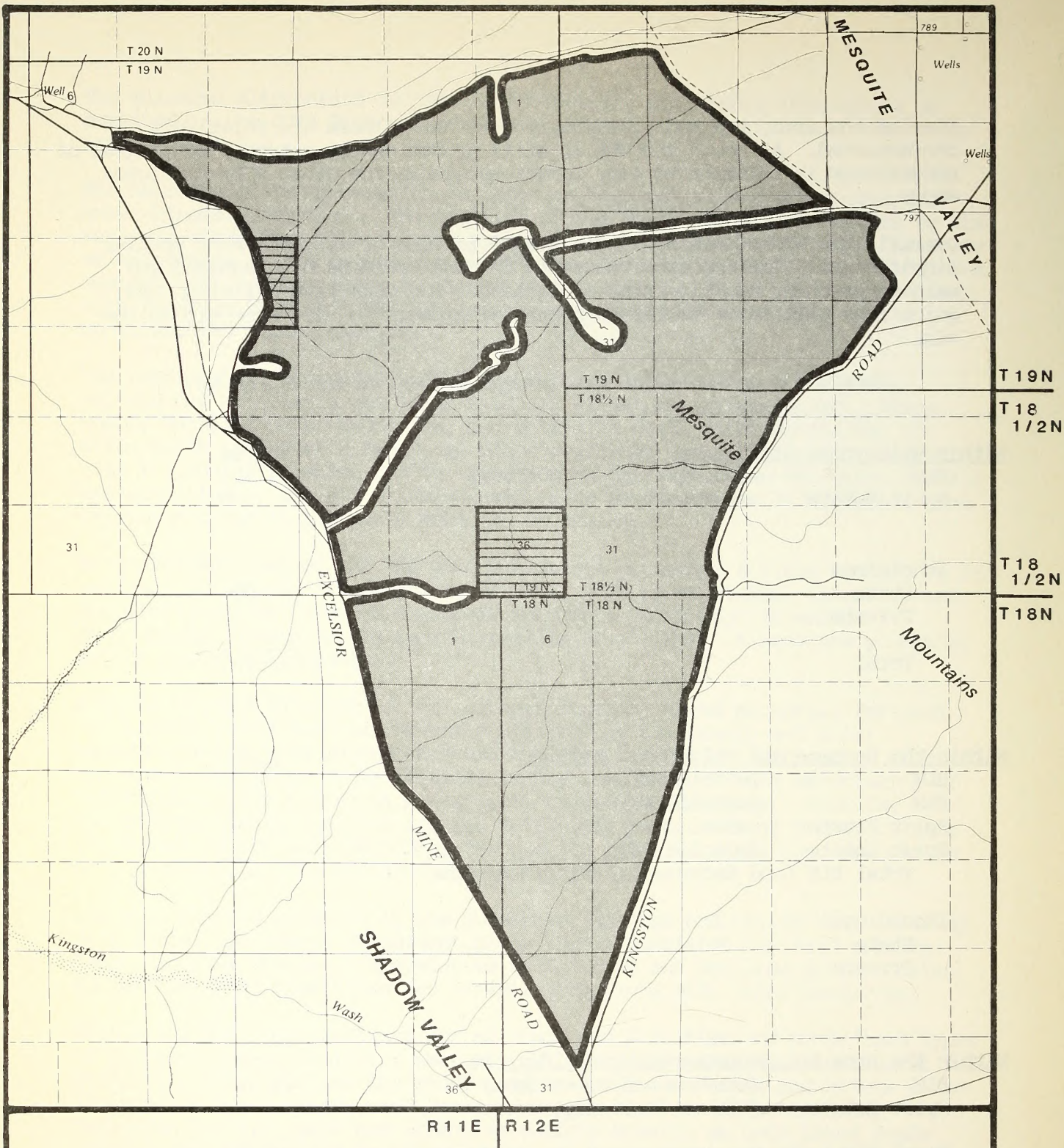
Within the WSA, opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation only minimally meet the criteria defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. Because the study area is small and narrow and exists as an isolated unit of public lands surrounded by active mining activities, developed private lands and extensive vehicle traffic on both paved roads forming the western and eastern boundaries, it is difficult to escape the sights and sounds of civilization. These outside sights and sounds detract from the sense of solitude and remoteness to be experienced within the area. Two cherrystemmed routes in the northern portion nearly bisect the WSA in half allowing vehicle access to the foothills further reducing the opportunities for seclusion. There are approximately 14 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. Considering the small

size of the area, the human alterations to naturalness are relatively concentrated. Although the WSA is still predominantly natural, the degree of naturalness is inferior to many locations within the other WSAs mentioned above.

Overall, the WSA offers no single unique feature or attraction of special significance. The resource values in the WSA would be best managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. The CDCA Plan's limited use guidelines will serve to lessen potential impacts to resources within the WSA.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	28,124
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		896
Private		0
Total		<u>29,020</u>
 <u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		 <u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
 <u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		 <u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	28,124
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>28,124</u>



**North Mesquite Mountain
Proposal
MAP-1**

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-223
JUNE, 1988

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Overall, the primeval character of the WSA has been retained. Scattered adits and prospect holes exist adjacent to the nine miles of primitive routes within the WSA.
2. Solitude: The eastern portion of the WSA offers good opportunities for solitude in the canyon areas of the Mesquite Mountains. The lack of topographical variation and vegetation along the western portion limits these opportunities. Overall, it is difficult to escape the sights and sounds from vehicle noise along the well-travelled roads which form the boundaries.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Within the more mountainous areas of the study area, it is possible to find these opportunities, although the size and shape of the area does not allow adequate room for more than a few individuals.
4. Special Features: There are no special features within this WSA.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 28,124 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. Designation of the study area would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Wilderness values in the area are unpretentious. Other suitably recommended WSAs throughout the East Mojave National Service Area and the CDCA offer a more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,239,785
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote	1	343,753	88	3,625,981

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of five major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 14 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. Three are administered by the Las Vegas, Nevada District. The remainder are within the CDCA. The closest designated wilderness area is Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 160 miles south of the Mesquite WSA.

C. Manageability

The North Mesquite Mountains WSA is manageable as wilderness. There are no conflicting resource uses. Although the study area has a moderate potential for several minerals, only one mining claim encompassing 20 acres is located within the study area. No plans of operation have been filed.

The established grazing use which occurs in the WSA would continue under wilderness designation and would not significantly affect manageability.

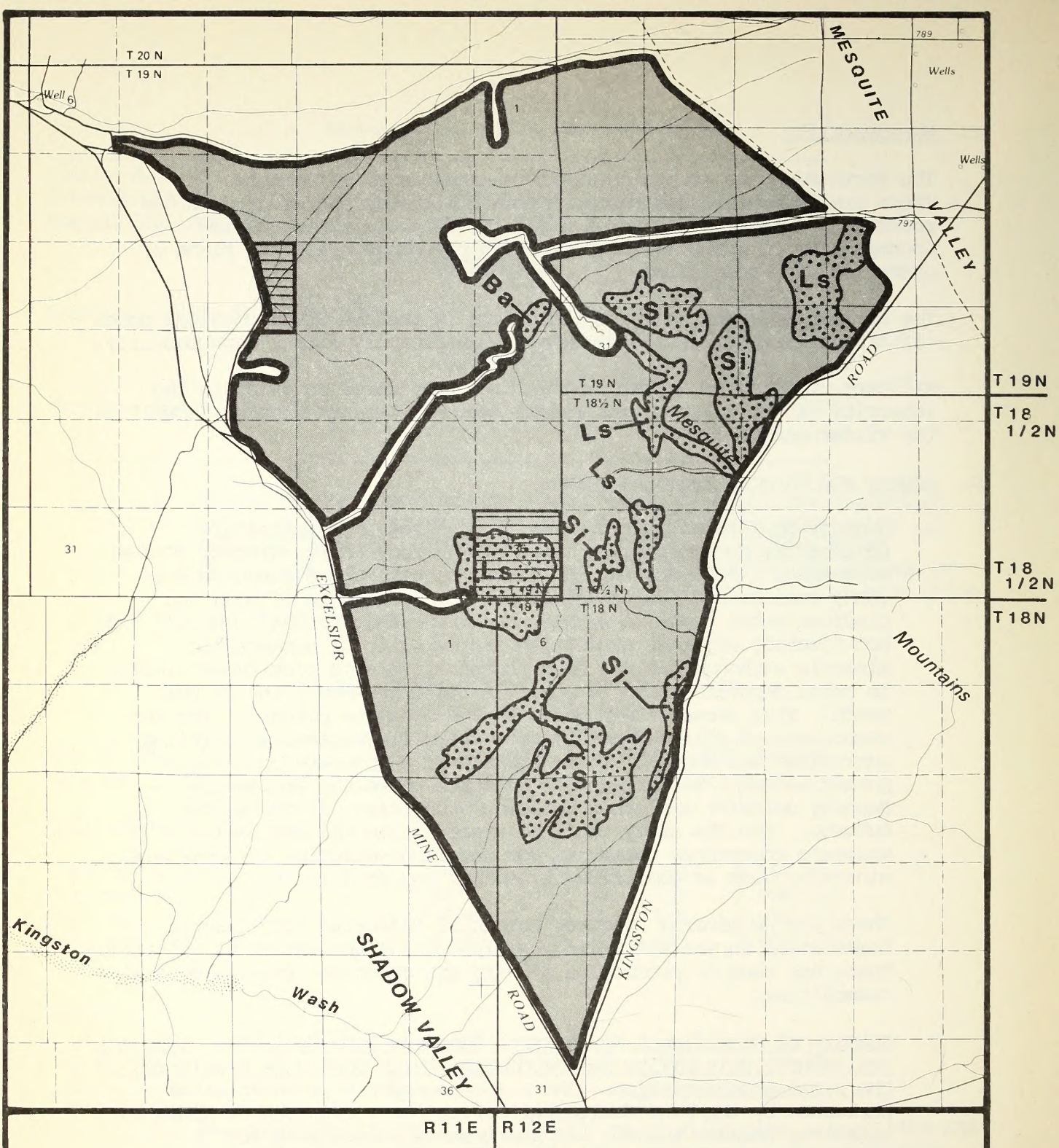
Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The BLM Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) assessment (1980) for the BLM Clark Mountain G-E-M Resource Area (GRA) indicated a low potential for the occurrence of base and precious metal deposits within the North Mesquite WSA. The GRA did not identify any past production for metallic or nonmetallic minerals although the WSA does contain favorable rock types similar to metal deposits known to occur in the Clark Mountains to the south. Five areas within the WSA have moderate potential for the occurrence of silica deposits from areas of Precambrian Stirling quartzite (See Map 2). Three areas have a moderate occurrence potential for limestone and/or dolomite where the Precambrian Noonday dolomite and other Cambrian/Ordovician carbonate rocks outcrop. The GRA study outlined areas within the WSA having a moderate occurrence potential for uncommon varieties of nonmetallic minerals, such as quartzite, limestone and/or dolomite.

There was no mineral resource potential indicated for leasable commodities in the WSA during the 1980 G-E-M assessment of the area. There has been no production of oil, gas or other leasable mineral commodities.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: There are no reports or inventories published by the U.S. Geological Survey or the Bureau of Mines for this area because the WSA was recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) completed their preliminary assessment of the Clark Mountain quadrangle during the period 1984-1985. As a result of this work, the CDMG published a mineral resource classification of the area in open file report OFR 85-151A. This study includes the Mesquite Mountains WSA in the northwest part of the quadrangle.



NONE	Recommended for Wilderness
	Recommended for Non Wilderness
	Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
	Split Estate
	State
	Private

Explanation	
	High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
	Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
M	Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
H	High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols	
Ba	Barite (Barium)
Ls	Limestone/ Dolomite
Si	Silical

**North Mesquite Mountain
Mineral Resource Potential**

**MAP-2
CDCA-223**

The CDMG study shows a moderate occurrence potential for nonmetallic industrial minerals. Barite was found to occur in the central part of the WSA as parallel veins up to four feet thick which extend up to 250 feet in length. The CDMG report indicated minor production from these deposits in the past. The accompanying mineral potential map shows areas (identified as Si) containing Precambrian Stirling quartzite which could be used as a source for silica. The Stirling quartzite outcrops mainly along the eastern part of the WSA. The eastern half of the WSA also contains carbonate rock, composed predominately of Precambrian Noonday Dolomite and the Nopah Formation. The State indicates that since there has been production from these rocks in other areas of the Noonday Formation, there is moderate potential for carbonate mineral deposits in this area as well.

The known metal occurrences consist of two unnamed gold prospects in the north central part of the WSA. There has been no production reported from either prospect. These occurrences consist of small, altered quartz veins in Precambrian gneiss. These data combined with the BLM GEM data indicate that gold resources are considered as having a low potential for occurrence in this WSA under the BLM mineral potential for occurrence classification system. No mining or exploration activities were occurring in this WSA, and no plans for exploration have been received by the BLM as of December, 1987. Unpatented mining claims in the WSA are summarized in the following table taken from BLM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	1	1	N/A	20	20
Placer	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	1	1	N/A	20	20

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Under low intensity multiple use management there will be no immediate impact. Based upon the amount of recreational and mineral interest in the area, wilderness values are not expected to decline in the foreseeable future. Should interest increase, existing management guidelines outlined in CDCA plan will limit the amount of adverse impacts which could result.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available. Mining activities would be restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines outlined in the CDCA Plan which limit vehicle access and mitigates adverse effects on sensitive resource values.

3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the route designation process.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Some comments pointed out the existence of roads. After field checking, BLM made appropriate changes in boundaries.
2. Study Phase: Five letters were received on this WSA. Four favored wilderness designation for this unit. One wanted protection for the rare plant Penstemon stephensii, which occurs in an adjacent area (not within this WSA).

Respondents stated that the area's size, topography, and natural values provide excellent opportunities for solitude and wilderness related recreation. The letter opposing wilderness designation noted the presence of mining scars, the noise of military overflights, vehicle routes showing ORV use and the fact that non-wilderness areas surround the unit on two sides.

One comment was received in response to the Public Input Workbook. It noted evidence of extensive mining and expressed the fear that rockhounds and others would be unable to reach interesting areas because of lack of access.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: Few public comments were received which were specific to this WSA. This WSA was one of many WSAs opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-road vehicle groups. The group made up its own map showing this unit classified as "moderate use." A large number of club members sent in printed coupons or letters supporting this map. Conservation groups and their supporters generally wanted a wilderness recommendation for all WSAs but did not press hard for this unit.

4. Proposed Plan: Few comments were received which were specific to the WSA. Conservation and motorized vehicle oriented groups maintained the same positions as for the Draft Plan Alternatives. No comments were received from local governments.

Mesquite Mountains

CDCA 225

MESQUITE MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)
(CDCA-225)

1. **THE STUDY AREA** — 55,229 acres

The Mesquite Mountains WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 50,957 acres of public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 3,755 acres of lands belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totaling approximately 517 acres. No split-estate lands exist within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 and Table 1).

This triangular-shaped study area is bordered on the west by Kingston Road, on the northeast by the Old Traction Road, and on the east by the graded road from the Umberci Mine. The south boundary is the northern edge of a utility right-of-way which contains power transmission lines. This boundary is located along an imaginary line 400 feet north of the three transmission lines in place in 1979 except where the service road extends beyond 400 feet and then the service road is the boundary. These powerlines and portions of the WSA are within an energy and utility transmission corridor identified by the State of California and BLM.

The study area comprises a portion of both the Mesquite Mountains and the Clark Mountain Range. The western portion, containing the Mesquite Mountains has more gradual rising slopes than does the abrupt and steep eastern half. The Clark Mountain Range, which encompasses the eastern portion, is rough and rocky with numerous small caves in the porous rock. A well travelled route through Mesquite Pass bisects these two mountain ranges, effectively splitting the WSA into two segments. Bajadas and the southern extremity of Mesquite Valley are an integral part of the area. Dominant vegetation ranges from creosote brush sage associations on the bajadas to blackbrush, Joshua trees and pinyon-juniper at the higher elevations. One plant species of concern occurs within the study area. Rusby's desert mallow (Sphaeralcea rusbyi var. eremicola) is a candidate for listing as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). However, investigations to date have not uncovered the existence of any Federally-listed rare, threatened or endangered plant or animal species.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. **RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE** — 0 acres recommended for wilderness
50,957 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The no wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the WSA does not contain any noteworthy special features and would not contribute to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS); (2) there is almost no demand for primitive recreational opportunities within this WSA; (3) the WSA possesses only marginal wilderness values; (4) large portions of the area have moderate to high potential for one or more of the following commodities: lead, silver, zinc, gypsum, and limestone; and (5) manageability as wilderness is further complicated by the presence of non-Federal inholdings and by the presence of a CDCA-designated utility corridor partially within the WSA.

The addition of the Mesquite Mountains WSA to the NWPS would not add to the diversity or uniqueness of the system, nor would it add significantly to the wilderness recreational opportunities available in the region. The landform and ecosystem exhibited by the study area is already well represented in other areas identified for wilderness preservation. Three nearby WSAs, Kingston Mountains WSA (CDCA-222), four miles west; Castle Peaks WSA (CDCA-266), 30 miles southeast; and Nopah Mountains WSA (CDCA-150) 25 miles north, contain a combined total of over 150,000 acres which BLM is recommending for wilderness designation. All are mountainous, and all contain a better representation of the same ecosystem found within the Mesquite Mountains WSA.

The naturalness and opportunities for solitude within this WSA only minimally meet the criteria defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. Because the study area is bounded by well-travelled roads, it is difficult to escape the sights and sounds of civilization. These sights and sounds detract from the sense of solitude and remoteness to be experienced within the area. Human alterations to naturalness include evidence of past mining activities. Although the WSA is still predominantly natural, the degree of naturalness apparent here is inferior to many locations within the WSAs discussed above. There are approximately 19 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

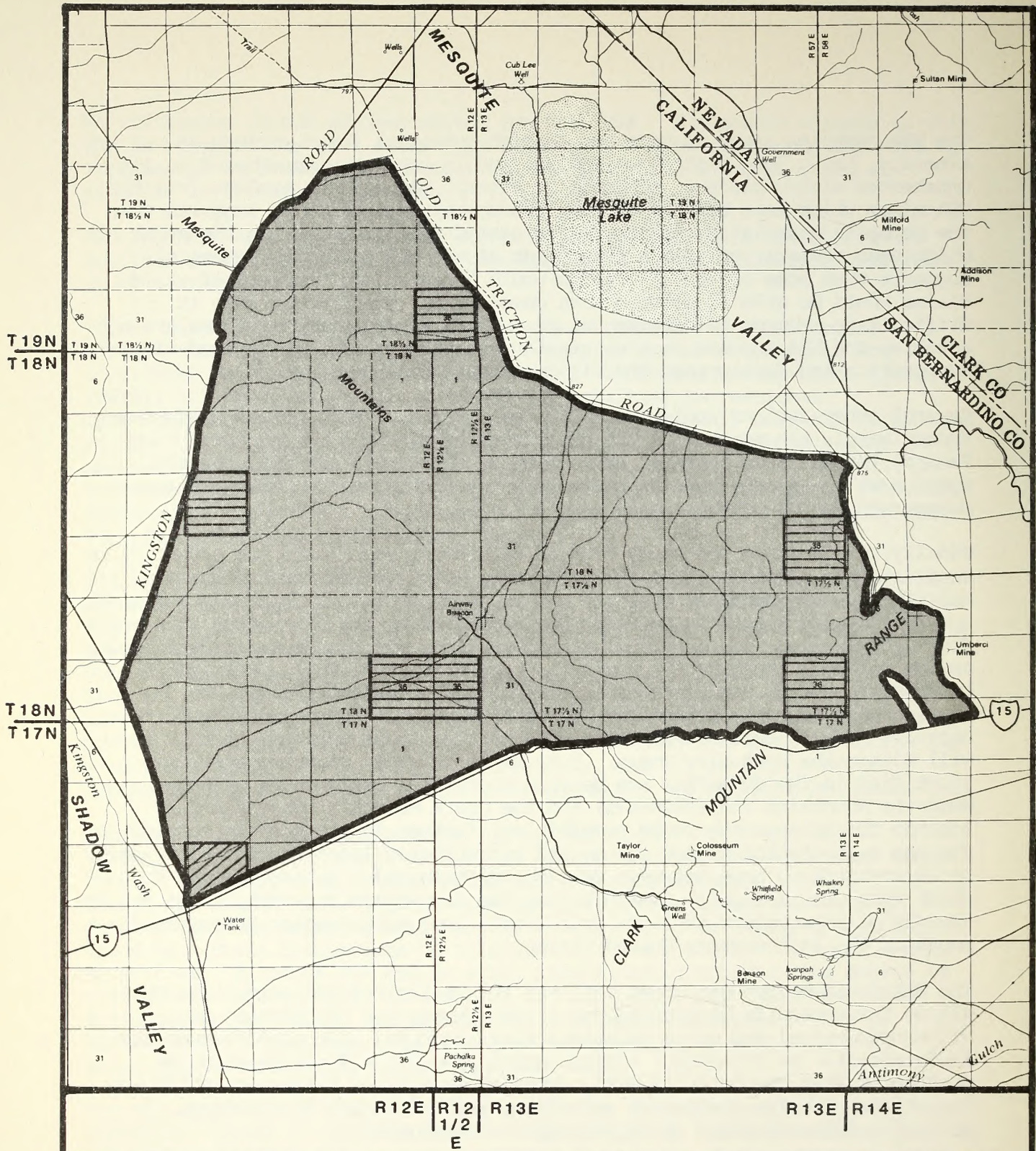
The WSA receives low recreation use (less than 100 visitor-use days annually), which is almost exclusively motorized use for rockhounding and upland game hunting. Demand for primitive recreation opportunities in this WSA is almost nonexistent. The area receives little use presumably because there is little to attract visitors, who are drawn instead to the other nearby areas containing a wealth of special features.

The WSA contains areas of moderate to high potential for a variety of minerals, has a long history of mining, and is presently encumbered by 111 unpatented mining claims. Although an attempt was made to exclude from the WSA mines which have been major past producers, geologic data suggests that the deposits associated with the mines extend into the WSA. In the event of wilderness designation, BLM's assessment of the WSA's mineral potential suggests that some of its 111 claims would prove valid. Holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with development, which would make it difficult to protect wilderness values. Since the wilderness values are not notable, the WSA appears to have greater value for carefully managed mineral exploration and development than it does as wilderness.


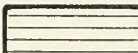

Several other factors would complicate management of this WSA as wilderness. Approximately ten percent of the Mesquite Mountains WSA is composed of non-Federal lands. This acreage, consisting of numerous individual parcels, would have to be acquired to assure that uses incompatible with wilderness management do not occur.

Finally, designating the study area as wilderness would have the potential to conflict with development of future communication and energy transmission facilities. The southern boundary and portions of the study area are within a two-mile wide corridor (Corridor D) identified by the final CDCA Plan and a four- to six-mile wide existing utility corridor for the State of California as identified in the Western Regional Corridor Study (1980). Corridor D currently contains one fiber optics line, one 500 KV and two 287 KV transmission lines maintained by Southern California Edison. Although this corridor has not exceeded development capacity, it is anticipated that it will within the next five years. Many of the sixteen planning corridors identified in the CDCA Plan are nearing capacity. Designation of the Mesquite Mountains WSA (CDCA-225) and the Clark Mountain WSA (CDCA-229) located two miles south would prohibit any further development in corridor D forcing installation of new energy and transmission lines in other corridors or in areas which have not been previously disturbed. Depending upon the which WSAs are ultimately designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may or may not be constraints to long-term energy and communication transmission needs in the southwestern United States.

The WSA would be managed under the CDCA Plan's limited use guidelines which allows for carefully controlled use of the resources. Protection of wilderness values and other resource values is being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the Clark Mountain Resource Management Plan completed in 1985. Management actions allow uses which are compatible with the protection and enhancement of sensitive resources, primarily desert bighorn sheep (See Special Features).



- | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|
|  | NONE | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS | |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS | |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
|  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | STATE |
|  | PRIVATE |

**Mesquite Mountains
Proposal
MAP-1**

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MILES

CDCA-225
JUNE, 1988

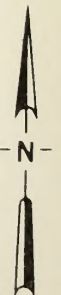


TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	50,957
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		3,755
Private		517
Total		<u>55,229</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	50,957
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>50,957</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The majority of the area is affected primarily by the forces of nature with man's work substantially unnoticeable. A route, once used for access to an airway beacon, bisects the study area over Mesquite Pass. A small cement foundation remains where the beacon once existed.
2. Solitude: The size, shape and diversity of terrain and vegetation all contribute to the good opportunities for solitude available within the study area. These opportunities are more easily

attainable within the shallow canyons of the Mesquite and Clark Mountains. The bajadas in the southwest and northeast corners of the study area offer limited opportunities for this experience as they are negatively influenced by sounds of vehicle traffic on roads which form the study area boundaries.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Although the WSA does provide opportunities for a primitive recreational experience, it has attracted almost no use of this type.
4. Special Features: Rusby's desert mallow (*Sphaeralcea rusbyi* var. *eremicola*), has been reported from three locations within the study area. This plant is a BIM sensitive species and also a candidate for listing as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Clark Mountain range has a large, stable and possibly expanding desert bighorn sheep herd of probably 150 or more animals. One bighorn sheep guzzler is located within the WSA. Most of these sheep occupy the main range south of the WSA, although movement between the main range and the portion of the Clark Mountains north of the transmission line occurs with some regularity. It is also likely that at least some movement occurs from the northern Clark Mountains and the Mesquite Mountains; however, it is doubtful that the Mesquite Mountains comprise permanent bighorn sheep habitat. Good nesting and foraging habitat for raptors such as golden eagles, prairie falcons, and red-tailed hawks exists in the northern Clark Mountain Range and Mesquite Mountains.

Surveys to date have resulted in the location of seven archaeological sites. These sites indicate prehistoric human activities centered around seasonal procurement, processing of agave and temporary habitation associated with stone tool manufacturing and milling activities. Numerous rock shelters have been located and contain midden, flaked tools, lithic debris, pottery milling tools, fire-affected rocks, charcoal, and faunal remains. Ethnographic information indicates the Mesquite Mountains were utilized as a traditional hunting area by Panamint Shoshone and Chemehuevi groups.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 50,957 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. Designation of the study area would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features

to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Other suitably recommended WSA's throughout the CDCA offer a more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,216,952
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote	1	343,753	88	3,603,148

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of five major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 13 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. Three are administered by Nevada's Las Vegas District and the remainder are within the CDCA. The closest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 160 miles south of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Mesquite Mountains WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, manageability is complicated by the following factors: large zones of moderate to high mineral potential coupled with a large number of mining claims, and the presence of sizeable non-Federal inholdings.

Because the area is so highly mineralized, it is probable that many mining claims will withstand validity exams, therefore retaining valid, existing rights to continue with mining activities that are necessary and incidental to the mining operations after designation. The only restrictions placed on these activities is that they not cause unnecessary or undue degradation leaving sufficient latitude to cause severe impacts to existing wilderness values.

Approximately ten percent of the Mesquite Mountains WSA is composed of non-Federal lands. This acreage, consisting of numerous individual parcels, would have to be acquired to assure that uses incompatible with wilderness management do not occur. The San Bernardino County General Plan designates it as Rural Conservation. Zoning is Desert Living (DL) which would permit one residence on 40 acres. Under county planning guidance, several hundred private parcels could be created with allowable uses ranging from residential to industrial or commercial.

Presently, one bighorn sheep guzzler is located within the WSA. Maintenance is required approximately two times per year and normally requires mechanized equipment and vehicles for transportation of materials to the site.

Two pre-FLPMA rights-of-way exist within the WSA and include the Southern California Edison utility right-of-way and the San Bernardino County right-of-way for maintenance of Kingston Road. Maintenance of these two rights-of-way would continue to alter the natural character of the lands.

The WSA is within the Clark Mountain and Valley Wells Grazing Allotments. Allotment management plans completed for each grazing lease describe the grazing system to be followed and outlines actions to be taken to improve range conditions and minimize conflicts with other resources. Operation of these grazing leases are not expected to create manageability problems for this WSA.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Mesquite Mountains WSA is located in the BLM Clark Mountain Geology-Energy-Mineral (GEM) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M inventory (1980) outlined extensive areas within the WSA containing a moderate potential for limestone and/or

dolomite. Silica resources were also identified in the west-central portion of the WSA. The G-E-M data identified gypsum in the eastern end of the WSA with an estimated value of 618 million dollars (1978 basis). This area is considered as having a high potential for the occurrence of gypsum resources.

Past production of lead, zinc, silver and copper is reported from the Umberci and Kalley Mines, each about one-third of a mile outside the eastern boundary of the WSA. Historically, the site includes a past producer of copper, and known mineralization occurs on the periphery. The Calarivada Mine in the south-central part of the WSA reportedly made shipments of copper ore sometime before the GRA data was collected.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral survey was conducted in this area because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) completed their mineral resource classification of the Mesquite Mountains in 1985 and the study was published as open file report OFR 85-151A.

The CDMG study outlined extensive areas of dolomite/limestone and silica rock in the North Mesquite Mountains. The CDMG has classified this area as having a moderate occurrence potential for these commodities.

The Calarivada Mine, located along the south boundary of the WSA about two miles north of Ivanpah Hill, contains copper mineralization as a replacement deposit in limestone. Shipments of copper ore from this mine were reported to contain ten percent copper, and 15 ounces of silver per ton. No production figures are available from the CDMG report.

The Stateline Mine, located in the southeastern part of the WSA, is characterized by the localized mineral replacement of carbonate rock in the Bird Springs Formation by hydrothermal fluids rich in lead-zinc-silver minerals. In the adjacent Umberci and Kalley Mines, there is a similar lead-zinc-silver type of mineralization. In all cases, the metal occurrence potential is considered moderate.

The CDMG indicated a moderate potential for the occurrence of gypsum deposits along the eastern boundary of the Mesquite Mountain WSA. The gypsum outcrops with interbedded silty clays and shales on the northern slope of the Clark Mountains. These deposits contain three to four feet thick gypsum beds in the Permian Supai Formation. An unknown amount of gypsum has been mined from the inactive Shire gypsum mine. Under the BLM classification system, these gypsum deposits are considered as having a high potential for occurrence.

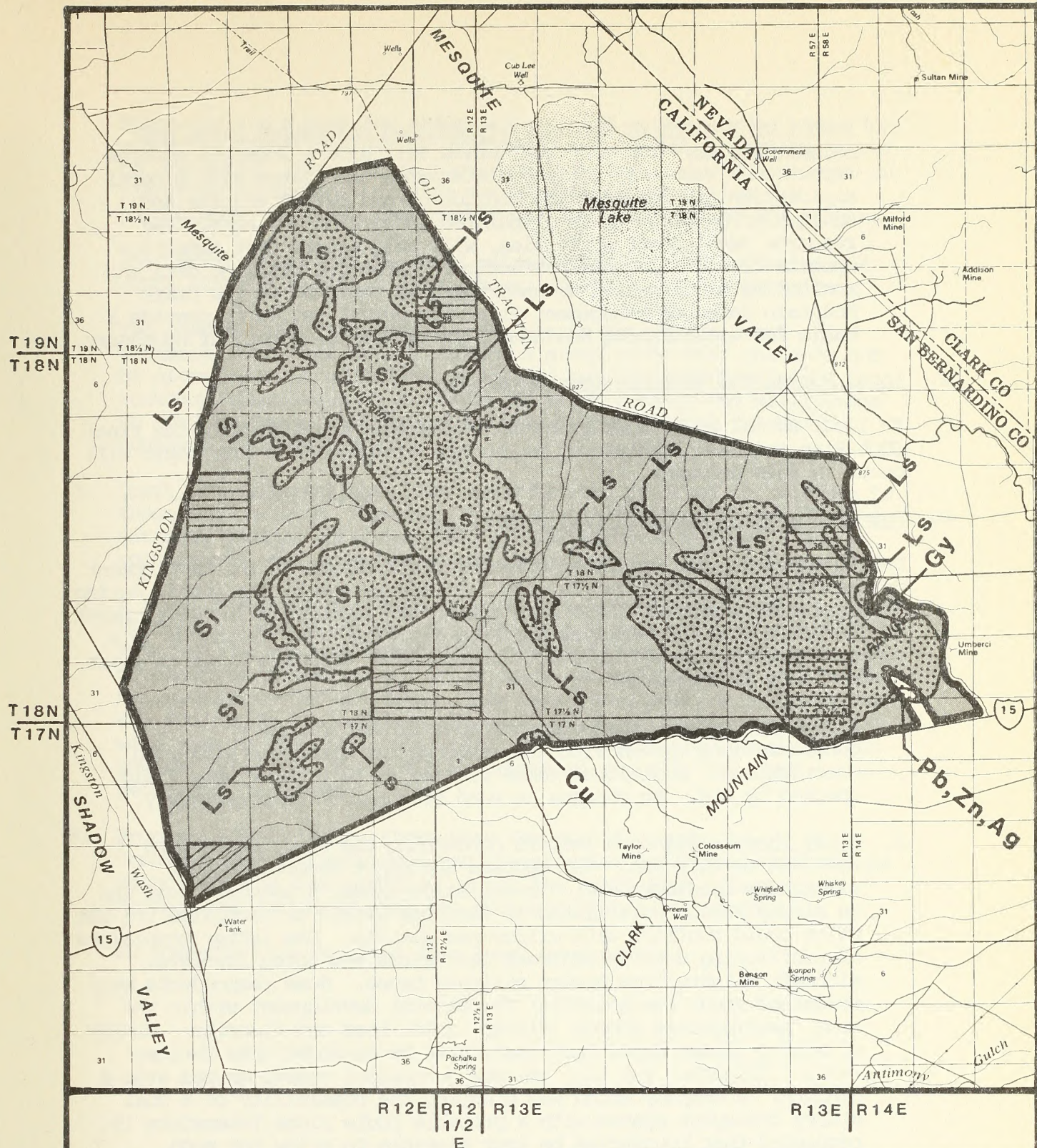
As of December, 1987, no plans of operation had been filed with the BLM in this WSA. The following mining claims (Table 4) were on file with BLM as of December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	29	29	N/A	580	580
Placer	N/A	81	81	N/A	3,240	3,240
Mill Site	N/A	1	1	N/A	5	5
Total	N/A	111	111	N/A	3,825	3,825

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values will decline over the long term as exploration and development occur in areas of moderate to high mineral potential. Decline in values will also occur as a result of parcel subdivision and development on the private acreage. Wilderness values will be retained in the portions of the WSA not subjected to mining.
2. Impact on Locatable/Saleable Mineral Exploration and Development: The proposed action will have no impact. Further exploration, as well as development of the 111 existing claims, can proceed subject to a plan of operations. Extraction of saleable materials will be at the discretion of the authorized officer.
3. Impact on Sensitive Wildlife Habitat: Future planned actions will be subject to environmental analysis to identify any potential impacts to bighorn sheep habitat, allowing development and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.
4. Impact on Native American Uses: Native American access to traditionally used sites will be retained.
5. Impact on Archeological Resources: All proposed surface disturbing activities will be subjected to environmental analysis to allow the detection and salvage of any resources.
6. Impact on Expansion of Regional Energy Transmission Corridors: The proposed action will allow full development of the existing energy and communication transmission corridor, consistent with CDCA Plan guidelines.

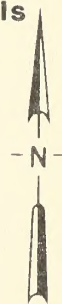


NONE	Recommended for Wilderness
	Recommended for Non Wilderness
	Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
	Split Estate
	State
	Private

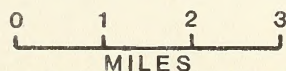
Explanation	
	High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
	Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
M	Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
H	High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

Ag	Silver
Cu	Copper
Gy	Gypsum
Ls	Limestone/ Dolomite
Pb	Lead
Si	Silica
Zn	Zinc



Mesquite Mountains Mineral Resource Potential



MAP-2
CDCA-225

7. Impact on Habitat of Candidate Threatened/Endangered Plant and Animal Species: The proposed action will have a moderate adverse impact as a result of surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development. Monitoring and patrol efforts and mitigation measures to be stipulated as part of any authorized resource development activities, will help assure that sensitive species receive adequate protection. Extensive baseline data and monitoring studies will be undertaken as outlined in the Clark Mountain Resource Management Plan with annual review to provide a basis for establishing additional protective measures, if necessary.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Those comments specific to inventory considerations agreed with the findings but disagreed with road descriptions. Additional roads claimed to be present were field checked by BLM. No changes in road designation were necessary.
2. Study Phase: Eighteen letters concerning the study phase were received on this WSA. Ten opposed and eight favored further wilderness consideration. Transmission lines, a boundary road and an airway beacon were listed as features within or alongside the WSA which could conflict with wilderness quality. One letter complained of conflicting uses in adjacent land areas and noted low-level aircraft flights from desert military bases. Some respondents were concerned about the potential for mineral development within the area, particularly copper, silver, gold, lead and fluorite. Owners of mining claims asked that their area be excluded from further study. Potential for oil, gas and geothermal resources was also a concern. A company which was studying the possibility of a coal slurry transport system with a probable route along Interstate 15 requested that boundaries be kept flexible to allow for such projects.

Proponents of wilderness designation described the area as highly scenic with outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The mountainous regions were described as unique forested islands and the Mesquite Mountains were said to be so pristine that they have not even been surveyed. Important ecological resources mentioned included the following: the Clark

Mountains are a home for endemic plants and animals and a haven for migrating birds; the cactus gardens in the southwest portion should be protected. The diverse topographic features, including caves in limestone formations, provide outstanding opportunities for photography, painting, exploratory hiking, backpacking and camping.

One letter asked that the road between this WSA and Stateline WSA (CDCA 225A) be excluded since it was concealed by the terrain.

Two comments were received in response to the Public Input workbook. A letter from a rockhound group asked that the area not be closed without additional study and public comment since rockhound families have a history of trash cleanup and willingness to stay on roads. The second letters requested that the western boundary be moved eastward.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: Few comments were received in response to these alternatives. However, this was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-highway vehicle groups.

A large number of club members sent in printed forms supporting the position of NOC which was to classify this area for moderate use." This was the recommendation of the Use Alternative. Conservation-oriented organizations and individuals generally wanted a wilderness recommendation for all WSAs. This would have been in agreement with the Protection Alternative. However, very few specific references were made to this particular WSA. One letter listed it along with several others which might have potential for oil, gas, and geothermal resources.

4. Proposed Plan: Again, there were few specific comments. Conservation- and motorized vehicle-oriented individuals and groups maintained the same position as for the Draft Plan Alternatives. Neither was satisfied with the Proposed Plan's recommendation.

No comments were received from local governments.

Stateline

CDCA 225A

STATELINE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-225A)

1. THE STUDY AREA — 8,854 acres

The Stateline WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 8,764 acres of public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and 90 acres of land belonging to the State of California. No split-estate lands exist within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 and Table 1).

Beginning at the powerline road in the southwestern corner of the WSA, the boundary heads northwest following the road to Umberci Mine. From the mine, the boundary traverses cross-country for one mile excluding a road and inactive mining prospects. At this point, the boundary again continues north until it intersects with the Old Traction Road which forms the northern boundary. The eastern boundary follows the State Line Pass Road for seven miles south until it intersects with the power transmission line which forms the entire southern boundary. This powerline road and portions of the WSA are within a utility and energy corridor identified by the BLM and the State of California.

The Stateline WSA lies at the eastern terminus of the 15-mile long Clark Mountain Range. The WSA contains 65% hills and 35% alluvial fans. The study area is a rocky, mountainous and isolated portion of the Clark Mountains. The mountains are generally fairly steep and rugged. Vegetation is primarily creosote bush and bursage on the bajadas with Mojave yucca, Joshua tree, cacti and various mixed shrubs on the slopes. The highest elevations contain some pinyon-juniper habitat. There are no known permanent water sources in the WSA. No Federal or State listed species of plants or wildlife occur within the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE — 0 acres recommended for wilderness 8,764 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Stateline WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

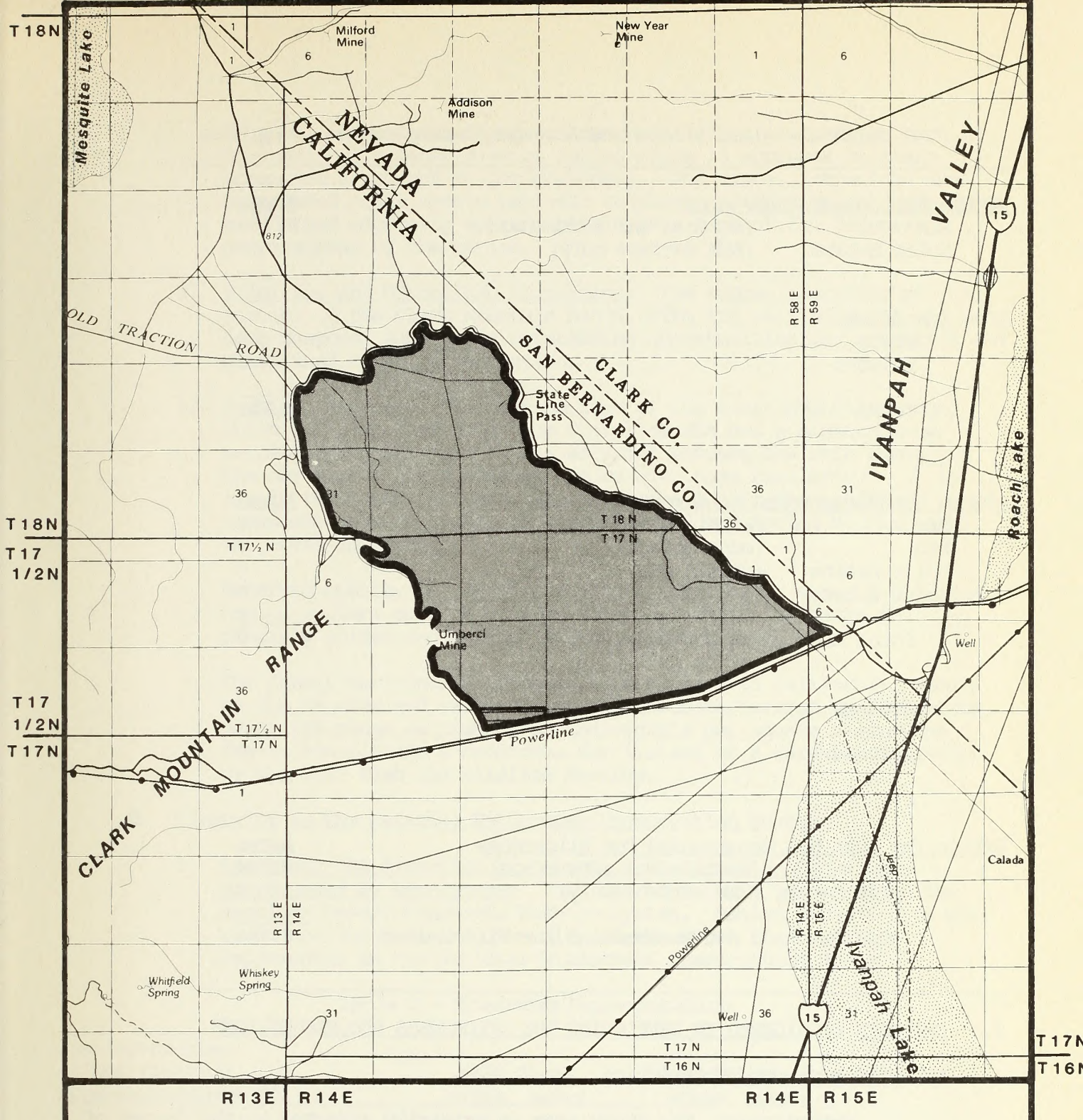
The no-wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the area does not possess any unique or outstanding features that are not represented in areas either already part of, or recommended for inclusion within the National Wilderness Preservation System, and (2) the areas value as wilderness is overshadowed by its value for mineral development and energy transmission.

The WSA's topography and vegetation are very similar to that found in the surrounding wilderness study areas. An abundance of areas in the general region are recommended for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The study area is within 50 air miles of 13 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. There are no unique special features in this WSA. The addition of this WSA to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) would not add to the diversity or uniqueness of the system, nor would it add significantly to the wilderness recreational opportunities available in the region. These factors, combined with the fact that this WSA has only marginal wilderness values, led to the nonsuitable recommendation. There are approximately five miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.


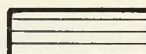
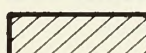
The WSA is classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of lead, silver and zinc as well as a moderate potential for limestone and dolomite. These areas encompass the mountainous portions or roughly 75% of the WSA. There are 22 mining claims in the WSA.

Designating the study area as wilderness would have the potential to conflict with development of future communication and energy transmission facilities. The southern boundary is within an energy and utility corridor identified by both the State of California in their Western Regional Corridor Study and by BLM in the final CDCA Plan.

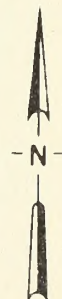
The resource values in the WSA would be managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's limited use guidelines coupled with restrictions outlined in existing management plans serve to lessen potential impacts to sensitive resources within the WSA.



- | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|
|  | NONE | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS | |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS | |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
|  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | STATE |
|  | PRIVATE |

**Stateline
Proposal
MAP-1**



CDCA-225A
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	8,764
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		90
Private		0
Total		<u>8,854</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	8,764
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>8,764</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The study area is primarily affected by the forces of nature with man's work substantially unnoticeable. A primitive way is located in the southeast corner, but the effect upon the naturalness of the area is insignificant.
2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude are available throughout the WSA. The irregular topography and low level of visitor use enhances these opportunities.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The rugged character of this portion of the Clark Mountain Range, with its related caves and long deep canyons, results in outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.
4. Special Features: The main portion of the Clark Mountain Range, which is located south of the Stateline WSA has a bighorn sheep population of 125 animals and movement between the main range and the northern Clark Mountains occurs with some regularity. It is likely that sheep traverse the Stateline WSA in the course of their movements between the Clark Mountains and the Spring Mountains to the north in Nevada.

Moderate quality nesting and foraging habitat for some of the more common raptors such as prairie falcons, red-tailed hawks and possibly golden eagles also exists in the WSA.

The desert tortoise, a BLM sensitive species in California, occurs on the bajadas and valley floors in creosote bursage habitat. Its densities range as high as 50 individuals per square mile. The desert tortoise is a candidate for listing as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 8,764 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. Designation of this WSA would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,259,145
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,645,341

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of four major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 13 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation, ten in the CDCA and three in Nevada's Las Vegas District. The closest designated wilderness area is within Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, located 130 miles southwest of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Stateline WSA is manageable as wilderness. Access to the area is limited to a few established vehicle routes including the powerline transmission road on the south and the State Line Pass Road on the east. Elsewhere, terrain precludes motorized access into the WSA.

Development of any valid mining claims with their associated roads and facilities would adversely impact wilderness values and complicate the management of the area as wilderness.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: At the time of the recommendation process, the BLM Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) assessment for the Clark Mountain G-E-M Resource Area (GRA) indicated a low to moderate

potential for the occurrence of industrial quality limestone and/or dolomite in the western portion of the Stateline WSA. There are also two lead-silver-zinc mines (Umberci and Kalley) adjacent to the southwest boundary of the WSA, and the Shire gypsum Mine about one-half of a mile west of the Kalley Mine. There were an estimated 20 unpatented lode claims in the WSA as of December, 1980.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey report or Bureau of Mines mineral survey was conducted for this WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) completed a mineral resource classification of the Clark Mountains in 1985 and published open file report OFR 85-15LA in 1985.

Similar to the BIM G-E-M data, OFR 85-15LA outlined a large area throughout the Stateline WSA with moderate potential for limestone and/or dolomite rock of the Carboniferous Monte Cristo limestone, the Bird Spring Formation, and the Cambrian Nopah Formation. Lead, silver and zinc mineralization occurs as replacement bodies in the Umberci and Kalley Mines, both of which have been cherrystemmed out of the Stateline WSA along the western boundary. The CDMG reported that both of these metal mines have produced unknown amounts of lead and zinc. The Umberci (or Carbonate King) Mine was reported to have produced 9,000 ounces of silver between 1917 and 1928. Small areas around both these mines are classified by the CDMG as having a moderate potential for lead, silver and zinc deposits.

Unpatented mining claims in the WSA are summarized in by the following table taken from BIM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	6	6	N/A	120	120
Placer	N/A	16	16	N/A	640	640
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	22	22	N/A	760	760

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Under low-intensity, multiple use management, there will be no immediate impact. Over the long term, existing solitude will gradually decline with projected gradually increasing off-highway vehicles (OHV) use of the area. Noise and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development will result in a gradual decline in wilderness values. This adverse impact is expected to be site-specific.

2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available. Mining activities would be restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines outlined in the CDCA Plan which limits vehicle access and mitigates adverse effects on sensitive resource values.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the CDCA Plan.
4. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep Habitat: Impacts to bighorn sheep and their habitat will be minor, consisting of site specific habitat loss as a result of surface disturbance associated with OHV use and mineral exploration and development.
5. Impact on Desert Tortoise Habitat: Localized impacts caused by vehicle use and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development will be minor. Management guidelines in the CDCA Plan along with enforcement of State laws will help provide protection of this species.
6. Impact on Energy and Utility Corridors: Full utilization of the utility corridor would be allowed consistent with CDCA Plan guidelines.

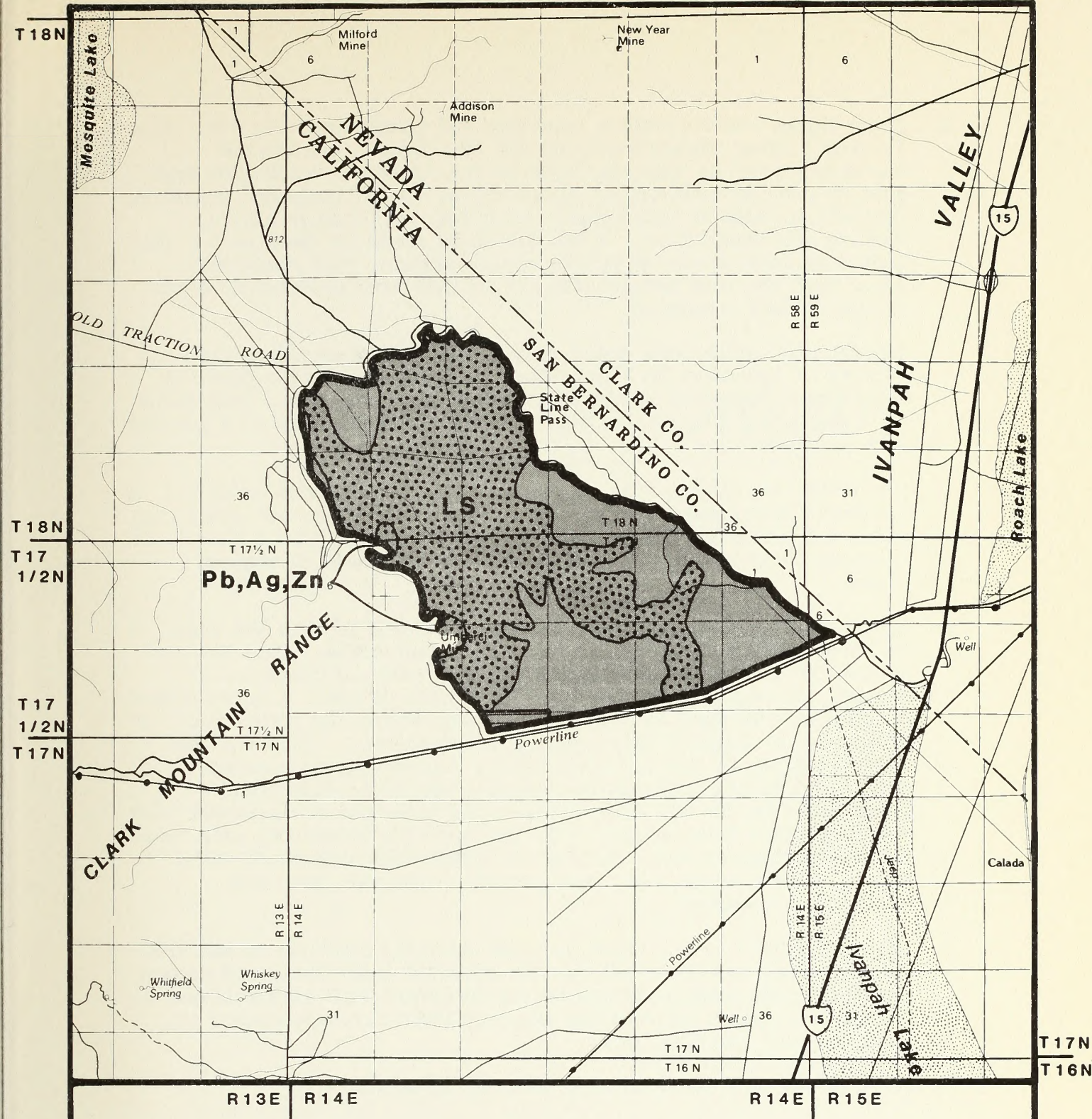
F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Most comments disagreed with the findings, stating that the area was not confining and that mining activity had not been adequately described. They felt that the area merited wilderness study status. Field checking indicated that the area meets the Wilderness Act criteria except for mining exclusions.



NONE	Recommended for Wilderness
	Recommended for Non Wilderness
	Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
	Split Estate
	State
	Private

Stateline
Mineral Resource Potential

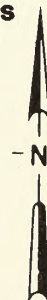
Explanation

	High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
	Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
M	Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
H	High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

0 1 2 3
MILES

Commodity Symbols

Ag	Silver
LS	Limestone/Dolomite
Pb	Lead
Zn	Zinc



MAP-2
CDCA-225A

2. Study Phase: Seven letters were received concerning this WSA. Five favored further wilderness study for this area. The diverse topography and the numerous caves in the limestone formations were said to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, such as photography, painting, exploratory hiking, camping and backpacking. A few discussed roads in the area but felt that they were concealed by the rugged terrain. One respondent asked that the road between WSA 225 and WSA 225A be deleted, since it was so well concealed.

Opponents of wilderness designation for this WSA mentioned the effects of transmission lines adjacent to the unit and a possible coal slurry transport system with a proposed route along Interstate 15. The latter stated that boundaries be kept flexible to allow for such projects.

One letter was received in response to the Public Input Workbook. A rockhound group asked that the area not be closed without additional study and public comment, since rockhound families have a history of cleaning up trash from the desert and a willingness to stay on roads.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: Few comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan alternatives. This WSA was opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed forms supporting the position of NOC which was to classify this area as "moderate use". This was the recommendation of the Use Alternative. Conservation-oriented organizations and individuals generally wanted a wilderness recommendation for all WSAs. This would have been in agreement with the Protection Alternative. Very few specific references were made to this particular WSA. One letter listed this area along with several others which might have potential for oil, gas, and geothermal resources.
4. Proposed Plan: Again, there were few specific comments on WSA 225. Conservation- and motorized vehicle-oriented individuals and groups maintained the same positions as for the Draft Plan Alternatives. Neither was satisfied with the Proposed Plan's recommendation of "limited use" for this unit.

No comments were received from local governments.

Clark Mountain

CDCA 227

CLARK MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-227)

1. THE STUDY AREA —

15,019 acres

The Clark Mountain WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the eastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 14,275 acres of public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 736 acres of lands belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totaling approximately 8 acres. No split-estate land exists within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 Table 1).

The WSA boundary follows a combination of graded dirt roads and topographical features. Beginning at Benson Mine in the northeast portion of the study area, the boundary trends northwest following topographical features for one and one-half miles then follows Greens Well Road northwest for one and one-half miles and continues southwest following Old Mine Road for approximately seven miles. The boundary then follows Kingston Road south for one-half mile and turns east following a graded dirt road for four miles to Pachalaka Spring. The boundary continues southeast following topographical features for one and one-half miles excluding the patented Copper World Mine. It then follows the Copper World Mine Road south for one-half miles and continues southeast cross-country until it intersects with the powerline transmission road right-of-way which it follows east for approximately one mile. The boundary then leaves the transmission line road and follows a graded dirt road northeast for approximately one mile excluding the road and picnic facilities owned by Molycorp. The boundary then heads east cross-country for three-fourths of a mile excluding a radio facility in the SW1/4 Section 35, T. 17N., R. 13E., SBEM. One-fourth mile east of the radio facility, the boundary follows a four-wheel drive road north for one-half mile then leaves the road and continues north cross-country for one and one-half miles until it intersects with the Benson Mine Road.

The central and eastern portions of the study area are dominated by Clark Mountain, a massive dark gray mountain which encompasses 70% of the WSA. West of the central mountain mass is a rolling benchland composed of alluvial material washed down from the peaks to the east. Elevations range from 3300 feet in the drainage bottoms to over 7900 feet atop Clark Mountain. The Clark Mountain range, like other high ranges of the Mojave Desert, possesses a variety of flora containing many species from the Great Basin and Southwestern Deserts. Vegetation is dominated by pinyon-juniper and Joshua tree woodlands with black bush and creosote bush associations occurring at the lower elevations. Three unusual plant assemblages occur throughout the study area and include: (1) Vegetation Associated with Seeps and Springs; (2) Basic Rupicola Assemblage; and (3) White Fir "Forest." Investigations to date have not discovered the existence of any Federally listed rare, threatened or endangered plant or animal species.

Several special designations overlay the WSA. Ninety-eight percent of the study area is within the East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated by the Secretary of the Interior in conjunction with approval of the California Desert Plan in 1980. Because of the area's outstanding natural resources, seventy percent of the study area is included in the larger Clark Mountain Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). A management plan and cooperative agreement signed by BLM and the California Department of Fish and Game (1969), under authority of the Sikes Act, outlines management actions intended to improve habitat or populations of sensitive wildlife species within and surrounding the WSA. Additionally, 4480 acres located on the southeast slope of Clark Mountain are designated as an Outstanding Natural Area with 480 acres currently withdrawn from mineral entry to protect recreation values. The EMNSA Plan proposes expansion of this withdrawal to encompass the Rocky Mountain White Fir and Basic Rupicola Unusual Plant Assemblages. This withdrawal would also benefit bighorn sheep and specialized bird populations found in the high elevation areas. Roughly 60% of the Clark Mountain WSA has been closed to motorized vehicle access since 1973. Motorized vehicle access in the remainder of the WSA was designated in the CDCA Plan as limited to existing or approved routes of travel.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2.	<u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> —	0 acres recommended for wilderness
		14,275 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The no-wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale:

- (1) the WSA is similar to nearby BLM WSA's recommended for wilderness;
- (2) designation would not add any additional ecosystems to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS);
- (3) portions of the WSA have a moderate potential for the occurrence of limestone, silver, copper, lead, zinc, tungsten, fluorite and rare earth materials;
- (4) manageability as wilderness would be complicated by the presence of a designated utility corridor partially within the WSA; and
- (5) the special features can be protected without wilderness designation under existing management plans.



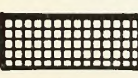
The landforms and ecosystems exhibited by the study area are already well represented in other areas identified for wilderness preservation. Three nearby WSAs, Kingston Mountains, 14 air miles northwest; Castle Peaks, 23 air miles east; Providence Mountains, 30 miles south; and the Granite Mountains, 45 air miles southwest, contain a combined total of over 160,000 acres which BLM is recommending for wilderness designation. All are mountainous, and all contain a greater representative sampling of the desert-mountain ecosystem found in the Clark Mountain WSA. The Kingston Mountains and Granite Mountains contain many of the special features identified in the Clark Mountain WSA including the Rocky Mountain White fir assemblages, pinyon-juniper oak woodlands and sensitive wildlife species.


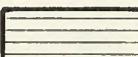
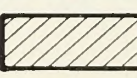
Because the study area is narrow, and exists as an isolated ridge of public land nearly surrounded by active developments, it is difficult to escape the sights and sounds of civilization. These outside sights and sounds detract from the sense of solitude and remoteness to be experienced within the area. Considering the small size of the area, human alterations to naturalness are relatively concentrated. Although the WSA is still predominantly natural, the degree of naturalness apparent here is inferior to many locations within the WSAs discussed above. There are approximately four miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

The central and eastern portions of the WSA exhibit a moderate potential for a variety of minerals and contain 77 unpatented mining claims. Although wilderness designation could constrain full development of these resources through withdrawal of the area from mineral entry, at least some of the existing claims may prove to have a valid discovery, and their development would constrain BLM's ability to ensure preservation of the overall study area.

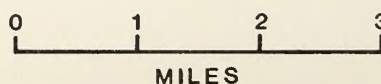
Motorized vehicle use will continue to be prohibited throughout most of the Clark Mountain WSA and a major portion of the ACEC, allowing a continuation of established primitive non-motorized recreation use patterns. Management for low-intensity carefully controlled use, coupled with vehicle closures, existing and proposed mineral withdrawals, and acquisition of private/State lands within the ACEC, will protect this WSA's special features and the quality of the primitive recreation opportunities without categorically prohibiting mining or other multiple uses within the entire area.



- | | | |
|---|------|---|
|  | NONE | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
|  | | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |
|  | | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
|  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | STATE |
|  | PRIVATE |

**Clark Mountain
Proposal
MAP-1**



CDCA-227
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	14,275
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		736
Private		8
Total		<u>15,019</u>

<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>

Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0

<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	14,275
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>14,275</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Clark Mountain and the western bajada appear to be affected primarily by the forces of nature. Old mines and mine structures are found within the study area. Although they may add to the historical interpretation of past land uses, these man-induced features alter the natural character of the WSA.

2. Solitude: These opportunities are attainable over a large portion of the WSA. As a result of the rugged outcrops combined with a dense and varied vegetation, the presence of other users within the interior may go largely unnoticed. As one moves away from the interior canyons of Clark Mountain, these opportunities are lessened due to the sights and sounds of mining activity adjacent to the WSA's northern boundary and from traffic along Interstate 15 located five miles from the WSA.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: These opportunities are more readily available within the central portion of the WSA due to the diversity and variety of topographical and vegetative screening and the fact that this portion of the study area is closed to motorized vehicles.
4. Special Features: The Clark Mountains reflect a blending of Great Basin and Mojave Desert environments and support vegetation and wildlife species representative of each.

Three areas classified by the CDCA Plan as unusual plant assemblages (UPAs) occur in the Clark Mountains WSA:

- 1) Vegetation Associated with Seeps and Springs: This UPA is classified as highly sensitive due to its extreme rarity in the CDCA and its importance to the survival of desert wildlife. It is found at several locations throughout the WSA.
- 2) Basic Rupicola Assemblage: This UPA is associated with limestone and dolomite outcroppings and is classified as highly sensitive due to the large number of endemic plant species for which it is noted. Much of the main mass of the Clark Mountain range is composed of Paleozoic marine deposits, primarily calcareous rocks (i.e., limestone or dolomite). Thus, the Clark Mountain range contains one of the most extensive and best developed stands of this UPA in the CDCA.
- 3) White Fir "forest": This UPA is characterized by groves of the Rocky Mountain form of white fir (Abies concolor mixed with pinyon pine and Utah juniper. The "forest" of white fir in the Clark Mountains consists of over 1,000 trees covering approximately 160 acres in two separate canyons and on the limestone wall below the crest of the mountain. The Clark Mountain stand is the largest and most extensive of the three relict stands of white fir in the CDCA. Due to its size, it supports the greatest number of species adapted to a moderately

moist habitat associated with this UPA. These persisting relict stands are of particular importance and interest because they are disjunct "islands" of coniferous forest lying between the Rocky Mountains and the mountains of California.

In order to protect recreation and natural resource values, the EMNSA and ACEC management plans propose expansion of the existing mineral withdrawals to include the limestone outcrops and Rocky Mountain white fir assemblages located on Clark Mountain.

The desert bighorn sheep, a BLM sensitive species in California are found throughout the Clark Mountain range, including that portion of the range north of Keaney Pass and into Nevada (outside of the WSA). Movement between the north and south portions of the range generally occurs through the Keaney Pass area. A population census conducted in 1984, cited 150 desert bighorn sheep including seven white sheep. This white variety of color morph has been reported from nearby mountain ranges in southern Nevada and is believed that this population originated in Nevada. This color morph is uncommon in Nevada and rare in California where its occurrence is restricted to the Clark Mountains. During the census, 78% of the animals counted were located in the vicinity of Pachalka Spring, a very important water source, and in the rocky hills just west of Colosseum Mine located two miles north of the WSA's northern boundary.

Roughly 30% of the WSA is located within the Shadow Valley Desert Tortoise Management Area. This portion of the WSA comprises habitat for an estimated 50-100 individuals per square mile. The desert tortoise is a BLM sensitive species and candidate for listing as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The eastern portion of the WSA is located in an area considered significant in terms of cultural resources. Numerous roasting pits, rock shelters, milling stations, rock art and lithic and ceramic scatters can be found along with temporary campsites. Of the 240 acres surveyed, 23 archaeological sites are known to occur within the study area.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 14,275 acres of the American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland ecosystem. Designation of the Clark Mountain WSA would not contribute any additional ecosystems or natural features that are not currently included or recommended for inclusion into the NWPS. The special features in this study, including the Rocky Mountain White fir UPA, are well represented in the suitably recommended Granite or Kingston Mountain WSAs.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	24	692,836
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	16	471,585

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of five major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 13 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 160 miles south of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Clark Mountain WSA is manageable as wilderness. Almost all of the primitive routes have been closed to motorized recreational vehicles since 1972. Rugged terrain and the lack of access precludes indiscriminate vehicular trespass in the remainder of the study area.

There are some significant issues which require additional management consideration should the area be designated as wilderness: (1) mineral development could make it impossible to maintain the WSA's wilderness values in their present condition. If some of the 77 unpatented mining claims within the WSA were found to be valid, their development would result in a loss of both naturalness and solitude in the central and eastern portions of the study area; and (2) designating the study area as wilderness has the potential to conflict with development of future communication and energy transmission facilities. Portions of the southern boundary are within a two- to four-mile wide utility corridor identified by the State of California in the Western Regional Corridor Study (1980), and also identified in the CDCA Plan. Designation would prohibit full development of the corridor, forcing installation of new energy transmission lines in other corridors or in areas not previously disturbed. Depending upon which WSA's are designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may be constraints placed upon the long-term energy and communication transmission capabilities in the southwestern United States.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: At the time of the recommendation process for the Clark Mountain WSA, BLM Geology-Energy-Mineral assessment (1980) for the Clark Mountain G-E-M-Resource Area (GRA) indicated that the WSA is favorable for precious and base metal deposits. The GRA identified high potential for the occurrence of copper, lead, zinc, and associated silver in the south-central portion of the WSA. Areas of moderate potential for the occurrence of silver, copper, lead, and zinc occur along the northeast boundary of the WSA. The GRA recognized a large deposit of carbonate rock indicating a moderate potential for the occurrence of industrial minerals in the WSA. The principal industrial mineral deposits are represented by limestone and dolomite located in the eastern half of the WSA.

Historic mining production was recognized in the GRA. The WSA includes the Clark Mountain Gold Mining District. Gold, copper, lead and silver were principally produced during the late 1800's to the 1930's from mines in this district. The Benson Mine, located along the northeast portion of the WSA, produced between three and

four million ounces of silver. The Kaipers Mine, located in the WSA just north of Pachalca Spring, produced high grade tonnages of lead, zinc and silver ore. The Copper World Mine, located along the southwest boundary, produced 2.4 million pounds of copper metal. The G-E-M recognized that the WSA may have a potential for deep-seated copper deposits, and because of the favorable host rocks, north-south trending thrust faults, and the inferred east-west lineaments, the area has potential for precious and base metal deposits.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: Neither the U.S. Geological Survey nor the U.S. Bureau of Mines conducted mineral surveys of this WSA because it was recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) conducted a mineral assessment of the Clark Mountain quadrangle during the period 1984-1985. Open file report OFR-85-151A, published in 1985, provided new and more detailed mineral resource potential data for the WSA than was recognized in the BLM G-E-M assessment.

The CDMG reported moderate potential for the occurrence of industrial silica deposits in the north and northwest portions of the WSA, principally from the Precambrian Stirling and Cambrian Zabriskie formations. The report also confirms the moderate potential for the occurrence of carbonate deposits and deposits of precious and base metals identified in the BLM G-E-M assessment; however, the area of high mineral potential for silver and base metals identified in the BLM G-E-M assessment has been classified as moderate by the CDMG. In addition, the CDMG report shows an area in the eastern portion of the WSA as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold and tungsten.

The CDMG report also identified an area in the eastern portion of the WSA as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of rare earth minerals. This is confirmed from 1986 and 1987 mining plans of operation filed by Molycorp, Inc., for exploration drilling along a suspected mineralized trend about two and one-half miles northwest from their operating Mountain Pass rare earth operations. This trend appears to extend into the southeast portion of the WSA. Current mining activity in the historic areas of past production immediately outside the boundary of the WSA is represented by the Colosseum Gold Mine startup in 1987, and the filing of mining plans of operation for exploration in the area of Benson Mine.

Unpatented mining claims located in the WSA are summarized in Table 4 which represents information on file with BLM as of January, 1988.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE MINING CLAIM	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITTABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITTABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	N/A	77	77	N/A	1,540	1,540
Placer	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	77	77	N/A	1,540	1,540

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Naturalness, opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation may gradually decline in site-specific areas as a result of projected gradually increasing mineral exploration and development. Alternative measures for protection of sensitive resources include continuation of the vehicle closed area which encompasses 60% of the study area and proposed mineral withdrawals as cited in the EMNSA Plan.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available, in areas not withdrawn, subject to the regulations cited in 43 CFR 3809 and additional stipulations outlined within the CDCA, EMNSA and ACEC management plans.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Sixty percent of the WSA would continue to be closed to motorized recreational vehicle use. Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the remainder of the WSA as identified in the EMNSA Plan and ACEC Management Plans.
4. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep Habitat: Impacts to bighorn sheep and their habitat will be negligible, consisting of minor site-specific habitat loss as a result of surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development.
5. Impact on Desert Tortoise Habitat: Localized impacts caused by vehicle use and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development will be minor. Management guidelines in the CDCA, EMNSA and ACEC plans along with enforcement of State laws will provide protection of this species and its habitat. Monitoring and patrol efforts and mitigation measures to be stipulated as part of any authorized resource development activities will assure that sensitive species receive adequate protection. Extensive baseline data and monitoring studies will be undertaken as outlined in the 1988 EMNSA Plan, with annual review to provide a basis for establishing additional protective measures, if necessary.



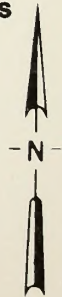
- NONE** Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

Explanation

- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- Ag Silver
- Au Gold
- Cu Copper
- FI Fluorite/Spar
- Ls Limestone/Dolomite
- Pb Lead
- RE Rare Earths
- W Tungsten
- Zn Zinc



Clark Mountain Mineral Resource Potential

0 1 2 3
MILES

MAP-2
CDCA-227

6. Impact on Grazing Allotments: The existing use will continue subject to the restrictions outlined in the AMP's for each allotment. The AMPs include planned actions to eliminate conflicts with wildlife use of waters and proposals to assess the effects of grazing on bighorn sheep. Populations of sensitive plant species will be monitored to determine the impacts, if any, on these species.
7. Impact on Sensitive Plant Species/Habitat: Localized impacts caused by surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development will adversely affect less than 1% of these species' habitats within the WSA. Existing and proposed mineral withdrawals coupled with actions cited in existing management plans provide protective measures for these species.
8. Impact on Cultural Resources: All proposed surface disturbing activities will be subject to environmental analysis to allow the detection of resources and the mitigation or avoidance of any impacts. Additional actions such as road closures and expansion of mineral withdrawals will lessen impacts.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: A large number of comments challenged road evaluations in the findings. Some felt that a designated road should be deleted, particularly the road to Pachalka Spring. Others claimed that many access roads to mines had been overlooked. Several respondents wanted the boundaries of the WSA expanded to the south and to the east. In contrast, some writers stated that only the higher levels of Clark Mountain qualified as wilderness and that the rest of the unit was covered with past or present mining activities or with mining claims and should be deleted. Field checks of roads and mines were made by BIM. Corrections were made wherever warranted.
2. Study Phase: Of the 41 comments received on this WSA, opposed and 20 favored wilderness. Those in favor said that the area provides an unusually fine wilderness experience. It was described as a unique forest island. Particularly noted were the white fir forest

at the top of Clark Mountain, as well as the pinyon pine, oaks, and other fascinating plants. One writer cited the occurrence here of eight endangered plants (investigations have not revealed their existence). The cactus gardens near Pachalka Spring were mentioned by several respondents as being among the best in the California Desert and worthy of preservation. Wildlife was said to be in abundance, including migrating birds and the Gila monster, which occurs infrequently in the California Desert. The area's varied topography provides fine opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and also contributes to the high scenic quality over much of the unit. One writer stated that the folded and faulted sedimentary rocks makes this an excellent site for geologic field study.

Persons opposed to wilderness were primarily concerned about its effect on mineral development. Several stated that the area is highly mineralized. Lists of minerals probably present included lead, silver, gold, copper, fluorite, cinnabar and others. Many stated that the evidence of mining operations, both past and present, rendered the area unfit for wilderness. Other factors cited as interfering with wilderness quality were nearby transmission lines, a major roadway, radar and telephone towers, habitations, fences, noise from military aircraft and signs of off-highway vehicle use. A company, which was considering proposing a coal slurry transport system which might follow the route of Interstate 15, asked that the boundaries of WSAs be left flexible to accommodate such projects. One letter requested access to the WSA area for individuals and families whose interest is rockhounding.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: Wilderness for this WSA was opposed by mining companies and the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-highway vehicle organizations. A large number of club members sent in letters or printed forms supporting the position of NOC which was to classify the mountainous portion of Clark Mountain as "limited use" and the rest of the WSA as "moderate use." In these communications, specific mention of WSA 227 was not made, only a recommendation on NOC's proposed map. The Use Alternative made the same recommendation for this area as did NOC. Conservation oriented organizations backed the recommendations of either the Balanced Alternative or the Protection Alternative, both of which classified WSA 227 as "controlled use", or wilderness. A large number of letters were received supporting this position, most of these letters were non-specific, simply supporting the wilderness recommended in the Protection Alternative or requesting that all WSAs be recommended for wilderness.
4. Proposed Plan: There were many letters from members and supporters of conservation-oriented organizations, who disliked the Proposed Plan because it did not recommend wilderness status for the Clark Mountains. The Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, Audubon Society and

other groups requested that this WSA be added to those recommended in the Proposed Plan. Reasons given were its outstanding opportunities for recreation and its unique natural values. They did not consider that making this area an Area of Critical Environmental Concern would offer adequate protection.

Opponents of wilderness designation for WSA 227 did not make an organized campaign against this WSA, because the Proposed Plan agreed with NOC's early recommendation of "limited use" for the high mountains and "moderate use" for the lower altitude bajadas and canyons.

No comments were received from local government.

5. 1982 Amendments to the California Desert Plan: In 1982, an amendment was proposed to delete the Clark Mountains and the rest of the area north of Interstate 15 from the EMNSA. The CDCA Plan had designated a large portion of the area north of Interstate 15 which contained WSA 227 and the surrounding area. There was an overwhelming response against this proposal (over 350 letters opposed and only six in favor). Most of the opponents specifically mentioned the need to keep the Clark Mountains within the EMNSA, which they perceived as protective designation. The reasons given were the same as those outlined above for the Draft Plan Alternatives and the Proposed Plan.

The State of California Resource Agency was one of a number of organizations which opposed removal of the Clark Mountains from the EMNSA. They stated that the outstanding scenic value and biologic resources merit strong protection. The San Bernardino County Planning Department opposed removal of western Clark Mountain and suggested an alternative which would delete only the eastern side of the range while protecting the claims of a large mining corporation, Molycorp. This alternative was included in the Final EIS, with the result that only the southeast corner of the WSA was deleted. There were only fourteen responses to this amendment to the FEIS. The majority still opposed any deletion from the EMNSA.

Hollow Hills

CDCA 228

Hollow Hills

RSB AQ12

HOLLOW HILLS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-228)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

30,886 acres

The Hollow Hills WSA (CDCA-228) is located in north central San Bernardino County within the northeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The community of Baker is less than one mile to the south. The WSA includes 29,187 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1,215 acres owned by the State of California and 484 acres of private land (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern boundary is located along an imaginary line 400 feet south of three high voltage power transmission lines in place in 1979, except where the service road extends beyond the 400 feet and then the boundary is the service road. These power lines, and portions of the WSA, are located within a utility corridor designated in the CDCA Plan that is two miles in width. The northern boundary departs from this line and then heads southwest along a mine access road to the historic town site of Silver Lake along State Route 127. The western boundary is State Route 127 and a road just east of Baker. The WSA is bounded to the south by a wood pole utility line that parallels Interstate 15, to the east by a road to a cabin and well at Cree Camp and then an unimproved dirt road leading northwest to the powerline service road. The one mile road to the Jumbo Mine on the western boundary is cherrystemmed.

The topography of the WSA varies from a flat to gently sloping bajada to low rolling hills and gentle mountains. The bajada is interlaced with washes and slopes to the west towards Silver Dry Lake. Low rolling hills in the eastern portion of the area lead to the western Turquoise Mountains, a gentle range of mountains having smooth ridges and rounded peaks. The WSA contains 40% hills, 25% alluvial fans, 20% plains and 15% dissected fans. Elevations range from 933 to 3,122 feet. The vegetative composition includes a typical creosote bush scrub plant assemblage.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0	acres recommended for wilderness
29,187	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Hollow Hills WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. Under this recommendation, future activities in the area will be controlled by moderate

intensity, multiple use management guidelines as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

Marginal wilderness values, potential for mineral development, motorized recreation use, the need to keep the land available for use as a designated utility corridor, and community expansion demands are of greater significance than the area's value as wilderness. Designation of this area as wilderness would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Scenic values in the area are unpretentious. Other WSAs in the California Desert that are recommended suitable offer a more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values. There are approximately 5.3 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

Historically, the area has been extensively prospected for a wide variety of mineral and energy resources. An estimated 2,280 acres of the WSA are encumbered with 58 mining claims. Geological data indicates that portions of the WSA have a moderate potential for uranium and thorium, gold, copper, sodium compounds, and sand and gravel. The cherrystemmed Jumbo Mine is a gold prospect. Access to, and development of, any valid claims would seriously degrade the natural character of the area.

Extraction of sand and gravel from within the WSA is considered critical to the long-term maintenance of Interstate Highway 15. Existing sand and gravel reserves are being depleted and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is actively searching for quality material sites that are within an economical hauling distance from the freeway.

The California Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Statewide Trails Plan indicates that a portion of the bajada within the WSA has potential for inclusion in a Statewide Motorized Trail System. Although current motorized recreation use levels are considered low, the potentials for increase are very high.

Wilderness designation would prohibit full development of the energy and transmission corridor identified in the 1980 CDCA Plan and EIS. This two-mile wide corridor overlaps the northern boundary of the WSA for approximately one mile. This corridor, along with others in the CDCA, were designated to accommodate the long-term energy and communication needs of the southwestern United States. Depending upon the juxtaposition of the WSAs ultimately designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may or may not be constraints to full development of these corridors.

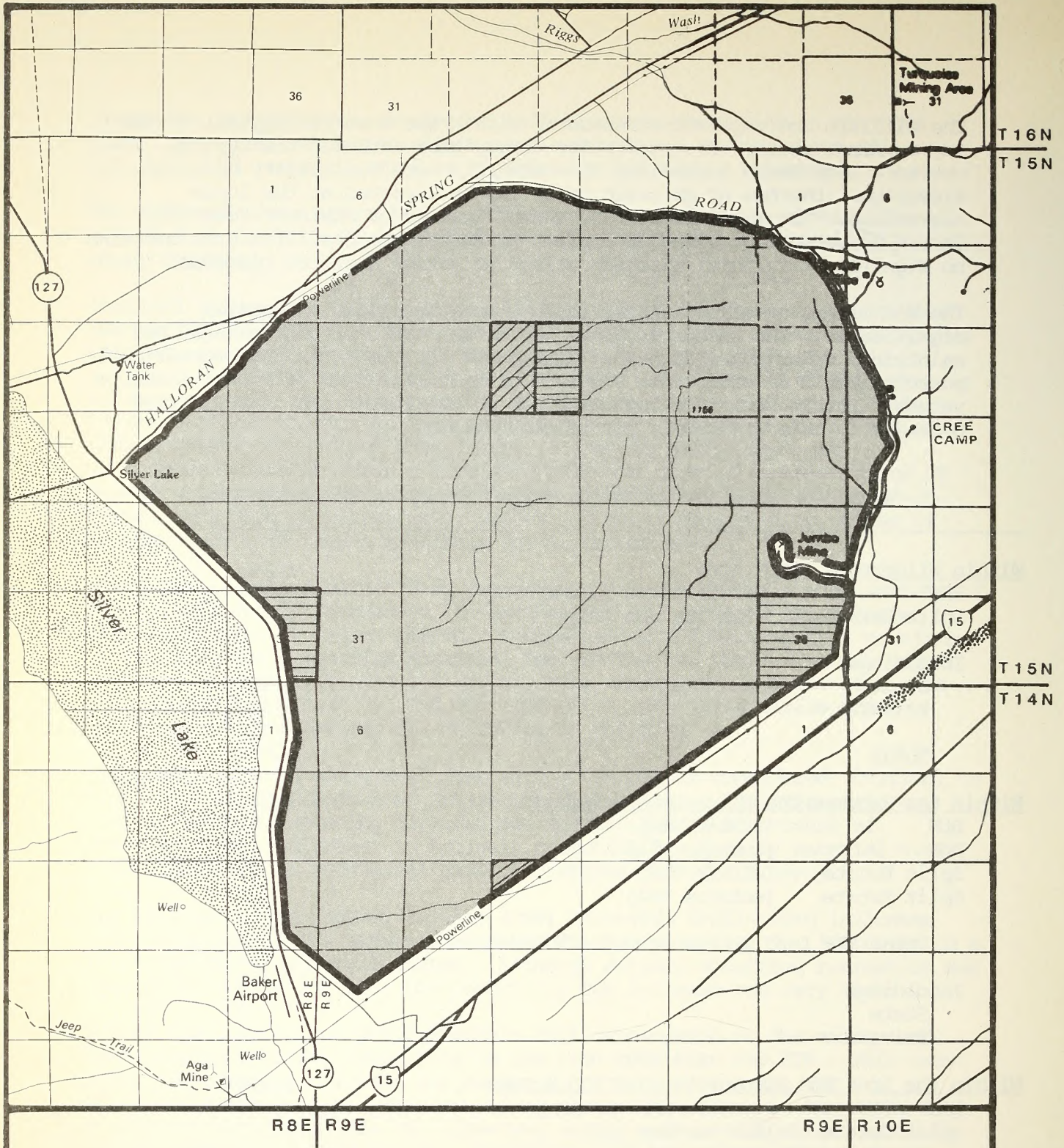
Community growth and the northern expansion of Baker will be limited if this WSA is designated wilderness. Baker is less than two miles from the WSA and is completely encircled by public land. The existing private land base in the community will not meet projected long-term growth.

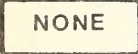



The wildlife and vegetative resources within the area are typical of the surrounding desert. The vegetative composition includes the typical creosote bush scrub assemblage that exhibits some variability based on elevation. Patches of saltbush scrub can be expected at the lower elevations. The area contains no unusual plants or State or Federally listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species. The area contains no significant cultural resource values or Native American concerns.


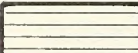

The WSA offers no single unique feature or attractions of special significance. The resource values in the WSA would be best managed and maintained under nonwilderness. Mining and vehicle dependant recreational pursuits would be allowed to continue without sacrifice of desert resource values. Future scenarios regarding use of the energy and communication corridor in this area would not be constrained.

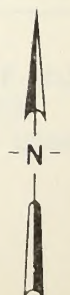
TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	29,187
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		1,215
Private		484
Total		<u>30,886</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	29,187
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>29,187</u>



- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|---|
|  | NONE |  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
|  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | STATE |
|  | PRIVATE |



**Hollow Hills
Proposal
MAP-1**

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MILES

CDCA-228
JUNE, 1988

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The majority of the area generally appears to have been affected primarily by forces of nature. Portions of the abandoned segments of the Tonopah and Tidewater railroad lie just inside the western boundary. However, due to the forces of nature, the railroad grade blends into the surrounding terrain.
2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude are available in the eastern portion of the WSA that is hilly and mountainous. However, visual screening is limited on the bajada and Interstate 15 is visible from many parts of the WSA. The hum of the transmission lines can also be heard close to the northern boundary of the WSA.

This WSA is periodically overflown by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The area provides for unconfined movement and primitive types of recreation. The absence of a permanent water source, extreme summer temperatures, and varied topography with few trails offer challenges or pose limitations to recreation, depending on an individual's point of view.
4. Special Features: There are no special features. The landforms, ecological diversity, and geologic features are not unusual, they are typical of features common throughout the surrounding desert and mountains.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 29,187 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. Designation of the Hollow Hills WSA as wilderness would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,238,722
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,624,918

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of eight major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 10 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Joshua Tree Wilderness, administered by Joshua Tree National Monument, 100 miles away.

C. Manageability

The Hollow Hills WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, two significant issues would complicate manageability of the area for wilderness.

Reasonable access to the two inholdings within the interior of the WSA does not currently exist. Use and development of any of the non-public land which would result in surface disturbance would not be compatible with wilderness values.

The area has a long history of mineral interest both for locateables and for sand and gravel. Currently, 58 mining claims encumber over 2,275 acres of the WSA. Access requirements and development of any valid mining claims have the potential to significantly degrade wilderness values.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitable Recommendation: The Hollow Hills WSA is located in the BLM Halloran Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness portion of the Desert Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) indicated in 1980 that talc is associated with Precambrian carbonate units as in a similar geologic environment north of the WSA (these carbonates had also been identified within the WSA). The GRA also indicated a "good" potential for talc in the northwestern part of the WSA. Copper, molybdenum, gold and turquoise mineralization occurs just east of the WSA, these deposits usually occur in late-stage, fracture-filling quartz veins which are also likely to be found within the study area. The Jumbo Mine (gold prospect) is located on the eastern boundary and the mineralization probably continues into the WSA. The G-E-M assessment data showed that a stream sediment geochemical sample from the wash, which forms the eastern WSA boundary, yielded the highest value for molybdenum in the northeastern CDCA. Some pre-1980 drilling near Turquoise Mountain, one and a half miles from the northeast boundary of the WSA, located small but significant amounts of molybdenum. Values for tin, another strategic metal, were above the mean in geochemical samples taken in the northwestern part of the WSA.

The draft Halloran GRA report assessed the eastern part of the WSA as having moderate potential for the occurrence of gold and copper, and the northeast part as having moderate potential for the occurrence of radioactive resources based on an anomaly detected by a national uranium resource evaluation airborne gamma-ray survey. Within the anomalous area there is a small occurrence of two geochemical sample sites which were above the statistical mean for

thorium. The southwestern part of the WSA had been classified by the U.S. Geological Survey as prospectively valuable (PV) for oil and gas. The southeastern edge of the WSA was classified as having moderate potential for sand and gravel resources based on past production for the construction of Interstate 15.

The classification identified in the 1980 GRA file appears to be west of the Overthrust Belt. Under the BLM classification system, this area should therefore be considered as having a low potential for the occurrence of oil and gas resources.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) or Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral survey was completed for this WSA because the WSA is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The new provisional series North of Baker 7.5' quadrangle map shows shafts and prospects both in and near the northern part of the WSA which may not have been investigated by the Desert Planning Staff in the 1980 GRA. An unauthorized placer operation was recently discovered 2,000 feet north of the WSA. The alluvium being worked has its source in the northern part of the WSA in which the GRA indicated had "speculative" potential (low to unknown mineral potential for occurrence) for gold and copper. The southern tip of the WSA has moderate potential for sand as fill material, based on an inquiry from a local contractor. A small area near the Silver Lake power substation has moderate potential for sand, based on a borrow pit showing on the new map mentioned above. The 1980 moderate potential classification for sand and gravel along the southeastern edge of the WSA has been deleted from the mineral potential map because the BLM records show that the mineral material sites do not extend into the WSA.

There is no current mining activity in the WSA. Unpatented mining claims located in the WSA are summarized in the following table taken from BLM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	2	2	N/A	40	40
Placer	N/A	56	56	N/A	2,240	2,240
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	58	58	N/A	2,280	2,280

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

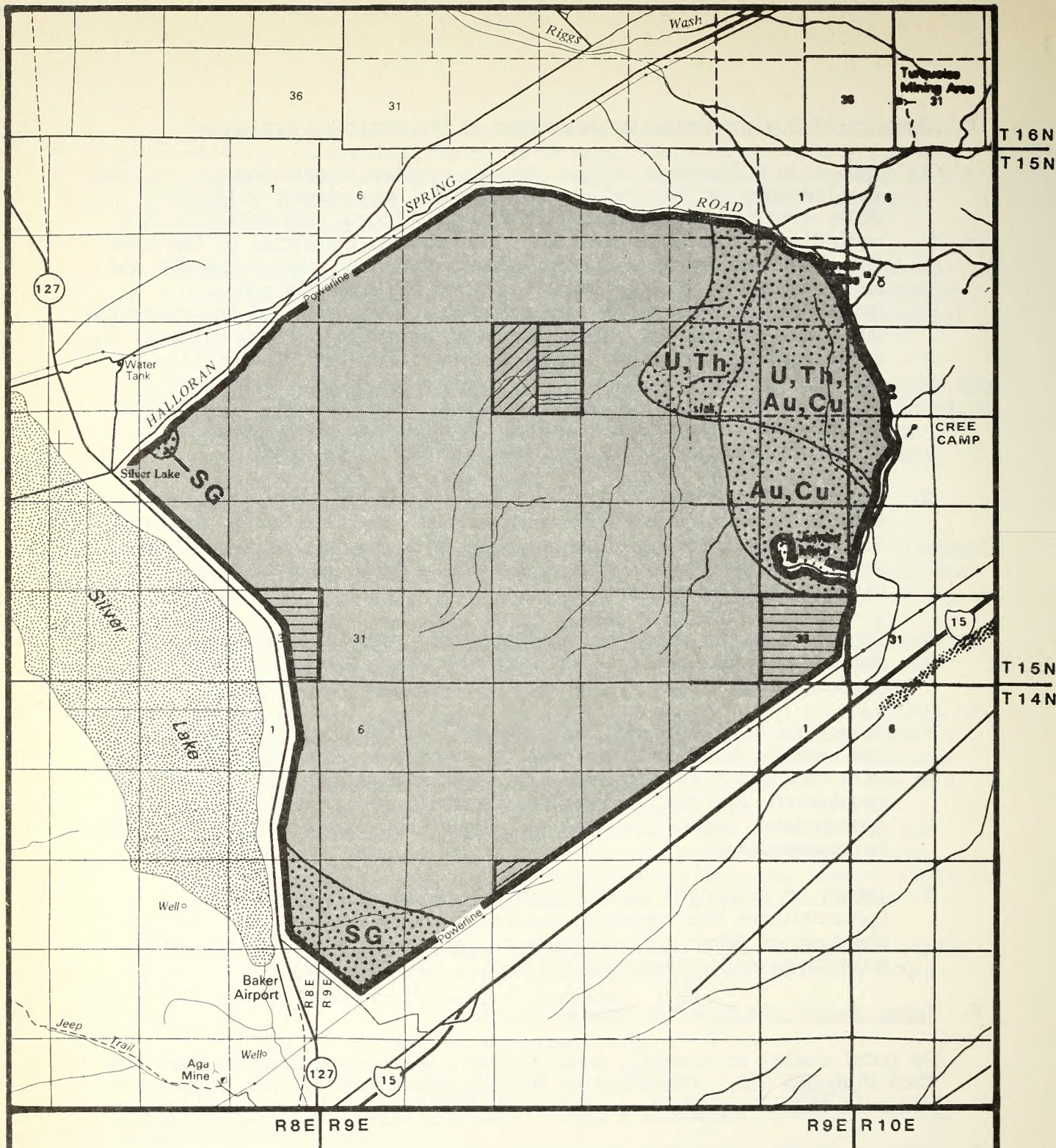
1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Noise, surface disturbance and access requirements for mineral exploration and development will result in minor adverse impacts to naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The mineral potential of the area is concentrated in the eastern and southeastern tip of the WSA and any development will primarily affect site-specific areas. Development and use of a portion of the WSA as part of the statewide OHV trail network will also adversely impact wilderness values. Any additional utility lines placed within the Desert Plan utility corridor inside the WSA will adversely affect naturalness and solitude values. Development of the sand and gravel reserves for maintenance of Interstate Highway 15 will also adversely affect wilderness values in the localized area of disturbance.
2. Impact on Motorized Vehicle Recreation Opportunities: Motorized vehicle recreation use opportunities will continue to be available to OHV users. Potential development of a portion of the Statewide Motorized Trail System within the WSA would be allowed consistent with CDCA Plan guidelines.
3. Impact on Desert Plan Utility Corridor: Full utilization of the utility corridor would be allowed consistent with CDCA Plan guidelines.
4. Impact on Locateable and Saleable Mineral Development: Opportunities for exploration and development of locateable and saleable minerals will be allowed to continue consistent with applicable laws and regulations and the guidelines identified in the CDCA Plan. If appropriate, demand for sand and gravel for maintenance of I-15 will be accommodated.
5. Impact on Community Expansion Opportunities for Baker, CA: Opportunities for community expansion on public lands adjacent to the town of Baker will continue to be available consistent with guidelines and criteria as defined in the CDCA Plan.

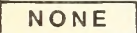



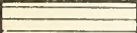
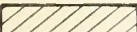
F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.



G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.



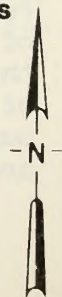
- | | | |
|--|------|---|
|  | NONE | Recommended for Wilderness |
|  | | Recommended for Non Wilderness |
|  | | Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness |
|  | | Split Estate |
|  | | State |
|  | | Private |

Explanation

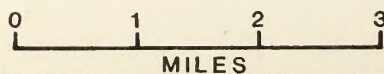
- | | |
|---|--|
|  | High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
|  | Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| M | Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area |
| H | High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area |

Commodity Symbols

- | | |
|-----------|---------|
| Au | Gold |
| Cu | Copper |
| SG | Sand |
| Th | Thorium |
| U | Uranium |



**Hollow Hills
Mineral Resource Potential**



**MAP-2
CDCA-228**

1. Inventory Phase: Comments dealt primarily with areas outside the WSA. Some questioned the boundaries of the WSA, while other claimed the existence of additional roads. The Cree Camp Road was added after further field checking. A few respondents agreed with the draft descriptive narrative.
2. Study Phase: Thirty-seven letters were received on the WSA: 34 were opposed to further consideration of this WSA for wilderness designation. The California Association of 4-Wheel Drive Clubs campaigned vigorously against WSA 228. Twenty-two forms were sent in listing various manmade intrusions within the area which interfere with the area's wilderness quality. These included mining activities, grazing, off-highway vehicle use, powerlines, roads, structures, and noise from Interstate 15. Also mentioned by the group were the types of recreation which were applicable to WSA 228; four-wheeling, motorcycling, rockhounding, mineral specimen collecting, photography, trail riding, rockhounding, hiking, camping, and backpacking.

The other opponents of wilderness designation mentioned a variety of concerns. A few noted the area's mineral potential - copper, molybdenum, gold, talc, and turquoise. The Planning Department of the County of San Bernardino suggested moving the southwestern boundary two to three miles away from the town of Baker to allow for community development. Several others listed manmade features interfering with wilderness quality; these have already been listed. In addition, noise of jet overflights from nearby military bases was noted. The suitability of this area for vehicle-oriented recreation, particularly rockhounding, was stressed.

A company which has proposed a coal slurry transport system which might follow Interstate 15 requested that WSA boundaries be left flexible to allow for such projects (no subsequent activity since the original proposal made in 1979).

The letters favoring wilderness designation requested reinstatement of the excluded northeastern portion of the area.

Three comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). One favored allowing legitimate mining exploration but prohibiting the general use of off-highway vehicles in order to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics. The second asked for a boundary change, and the third asked for multiple use in the area.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were no comments specific to this WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the Nation Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-road vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting a multiple use designation of "moderate use" for this WSA which was in agreement with the Balanced and Use Alternatives. Wilderness

proponents preferred the Protection Alternative which recommended "limited use" classification, or else asked that this area be recommended for wilderness.

4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this WSA in response to the Proposed Plan which recommended a classification of "moderate use" for this area. This was satisfactory for mining and vehicle-oriented groups but not for conservation groups who wanted all WSAs designated wilderness.

No comments were received from local governments.

Shadow Valley

CDCA 235A

SHADOW VALLEY WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-235A)

1. THE STUDY AREA —

9,703 acres

The Shadow Valley WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the central portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest communities are Baker, California, 25 road miles west; Las Vegas, Nevada, 85 road miles northeast; and Barstow, California, 85 roads miles west. The mining community of Mountain Pass, home to the western world's largest rare earth mine, is located nine miles northeast of the Shadow Valley WSA. The WSA includes 9,660 acres of public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and private inholdings totaling approximately 43 acres. No split-estate land exists within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The boundaries of this small WSA are formed by well-travelled roads utilized by highway travellers, mining companies and local ranchers. The boundaries are easily definable on the ground. The northwest boundary parallels a graded dirt road for four miles then traverses southeast then east along graded dirt roads for six miles until it intersects with the paved Cima Road. At this point, the boundary parallels the western berm of Cima Road north for six miles to within one-fourth mile of Interstate 15.

The WSA is completely within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated in 1980 by the Secretary of the Interior as part of the CDCA Plan. The WSA is relatively homogeneous, displaying little in the way of topographic relief or landform variation. Landforms of the Shadow Valley WSA consist of approximately 90% alluvial fans and 10% hills, presenting a flat topography with little variation with the exception of a small group of unnamed hills located on the northwest side. Soils are sandy in texture and light in color. Although easily accessible from Interstate 15 and the paved Cima Road, it's resource values have not provided as significant of an attraction as other nearby natural areas.

The WSA contains a representation of lifezones characteristic of those found throughout the CDCA. Overall, vegetation consists primarily of creosote bush, cholla, Mojave yucca and various types of grasses with Joshua trees occurring at the higher elevations. No BLM sensitive plant or wildlife species, and no Federal- or State-listed rare, threatened, or endangered plant or wildlife species are known to occur in this WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0	acres recommended for wilderness
9,660	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

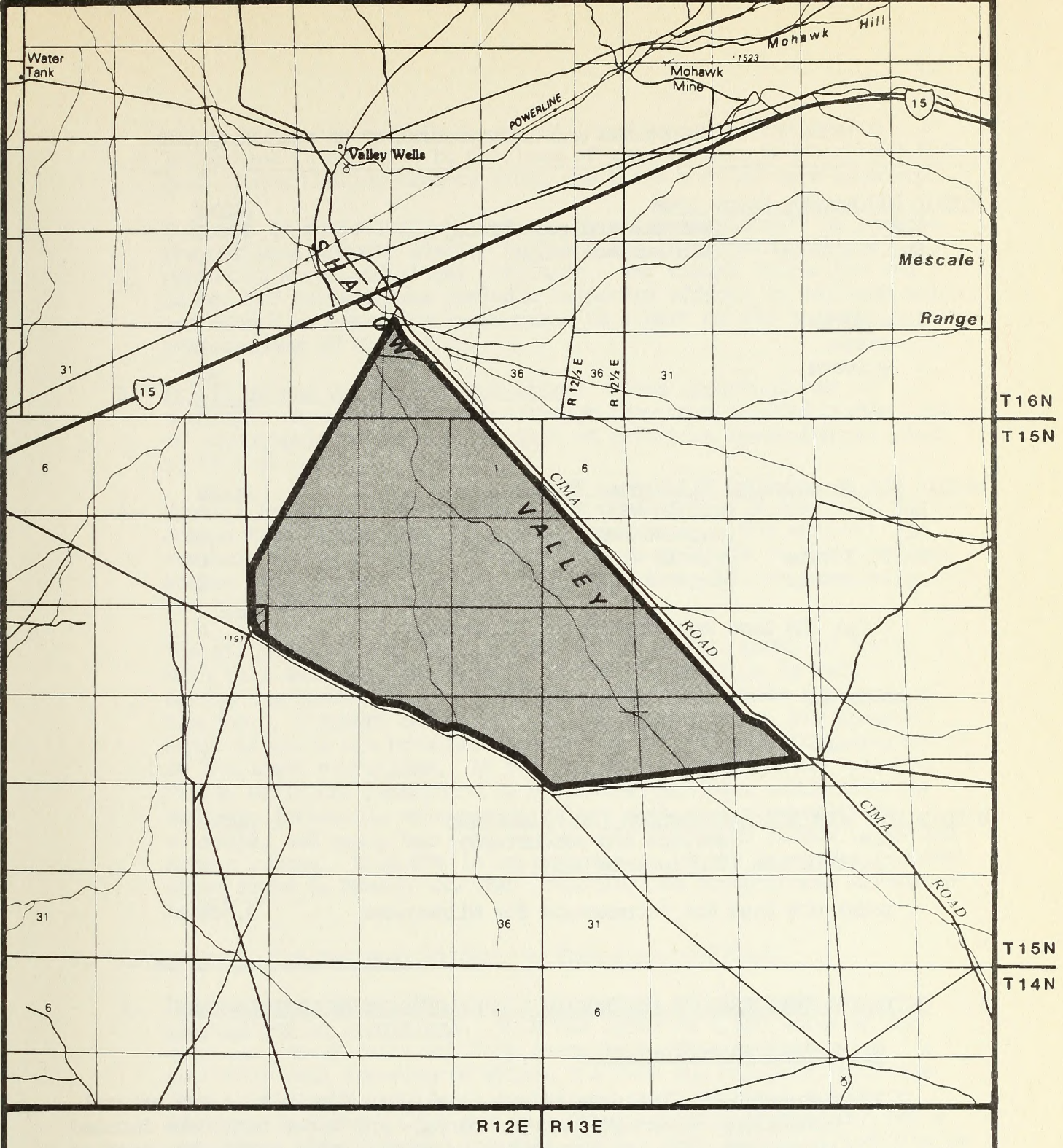
The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The nonsuitable recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the area does not possess any unique or outstanding features that are not represented in areas either already part of, or recommended for inclusion within the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS); and (2) the special features within the WSA can be protected under existing management guidelines.

The study area is within 50 air miles of six BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The WSA's topography and vegetation are very similar to that found in the surrounding wilderness study areas and there are no unique special features in this WSA not currently represented in other areas recommended for wilderness designation. The resources within the Shadow Valley WSA attract a moderate amount of recreational users dependent upon an off-highway vehicle (OHV) for access. Good opportunities exist for birding, hunting of upland game species, photography and some sightseeing. There is approximately one mile of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

Extraction of sand and gravel from within the WSA may prove to be critical in the long term for the resurfacing of Interstate 15 which lies one mile north of the WSA boundary. Existing reserves are being depleted and the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) is actively searching for quality material sites that are within an economical hauling distance from the freeway. Although this resource was rated as having a low occurrence potential due to lack of interest, CALTRANS has expressed a desire to do bulk sample testing in this WSA to determine the suitability of the materials for repair of Interstate 15.

Management of the WSA under the guidelines established in the CDCA Plan allows for low and moderate intensity carefully controlled use of the resources. Protection of wilderness and other resource values is being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the EMNSA Plan completed in 1988. These actions include enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas and requirement of a performance bond for all surface disturbing activities within the EMNSA.



NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

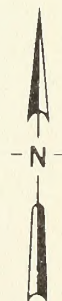
SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

STATE

PRIVATE

PRIVATE



Shadow Valley
Proposal
MAP-1

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-235A
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	9,660
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		43
Total		<u>9,703</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	9,660
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>9,660</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area is essentially in a primitive and natural condition. Although numerous corrals and water tanks are located throughout, all are substantially unnoticeable within the area as a whole.
2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude are more readily available in the southern portion due to the more extensive stands of Joshua trees. The northern portion is more open with less screening and limits one's opportunities for this experience. Intrusions also

occur from noise and visual impacts from vehicular traffic on Interstate 15 adjacent to portions of the northern boundary and from dump trucks hauling cinders along the WSA's northwestern boundary.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: These opportunities are available throughout the WSA although they were limited by the lack of topographic relief and the lack of effective screening provided by vegetation.
4. Special Features: The visual aspect of this WSA is dominated by the Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia* var. *jaegeriana*). The extreme southern end of the WSA lies within the boundaries of the Cima Dome Joshua tree "Forest" Unusual Plant Assemblage UPA, an area known for its high density of Joshua trees.

The elevation of the WSA drops as one moves from south to north. With this decrease, the density of the Joshua trees is reduced, making the landscape more open. Creosote bush, white bur-sage, box-thorn, staghorn and silver cholla, Mojave Yucca, big galleta, and fluffgrass are prominent components of the understory vegetation at the lower elevations. At the lowest elevation of the WSA, the Valley Wells UPA consisting of shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*) bud sage (*Artemisia spinescens*), along with four-wing saltbush, allscale, and spiny hop sage occurs with scattered Joshua trees and Mojave yuccas. This UPA is representative of the Great Basin desert scrub found in Nevada and Utah, reaching its southernmost extension here.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 9,660 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. This ecosystem is currently well represented within the NWPS and designation of the Shadow Valley WSA would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the system. Other suitably recommended WSA's throughout the EMNSA and the CDCA offer a more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,258,206
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,644,402

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of six major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of six BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 220 miles southwest of the Shadow Valley WSA.

C. Manageability

The WSA is manageable as wilderness. The boundaries of the study area are formed by paved roads and maintained, well-travelled, mining and ranching access routes. Interstate 15, located one mile from the WSA, provides easy access to the northern boundary.

The eastern, southwestern, and southeastern borders of the WSA may be difficult to manage as the adjacent terrain is flat, or nearly so. Steps to improve the manageability of WSA boundaries through realignment to natural barriers, creation of nonwilderness buffers along roads, or creation of artificial barriers, (berms, fences, barricades) would assist in reducing management conflicts.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Recommendation: The Shadow Valley WSA (CDCA-235A) is located in the BLM Cima Dome Geology-Energy-Mineral (GEM) Resource Area (GRA). The 1980 G-E-M resource data Appendix III, Volume B of the CDCA Plan had not been fully analyzed, integrated and interpreted during the recommendation process. G-E-M data in the EIS did state that the WSA has a potential for geothermal energy resources and that other data was insufficient to interpret the occurrence potential for other mineral resources.

Mineral resource data for the Cima Dome GRA file was not available for review during this summary process. Therefore, verification of the 1980 EIS G-E-M conclusions and mineral occurrence potential classifications that may have been available in 1980 to support these conclusions cannot be made.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys were conducted for this WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

A study of the East Mojave National Scenic Area, which included the WSA, was made by the BLM. This study compiled data collected and analyzed by the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) for their nonurban land mineral assessment. The findings in this study were published as a BLM report (Evans, J.R., (1986), Mineral Impact Study of a 2,000 Square Mile Area of the East Mojave Desert, San Bernardino County, California. In this study, the BLM followed the

CDMG mineral resource zone (MRZ) classification scheme with respect to the presence, absence or likely occurrence of mineral deposits. The report by Evans showed that the largely alluvial covered Shadow Valley WSA was classified as having unknown mineral potential for mineral resources.

The area is classified as prospectively valuable for geothermal resources by the BLM (1982). There has been no expressed interest in exploration or development for geothermal resources identified in the 1980 EIS, and no direct physical evidence in the record of geothermal resources. Under the BLM classification system, this area would be considered as having a low potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources based solely on geologic inference. The potential for the occurrence of common mineral materials (e.g., sand and gravel) is determined to be low due to the lack of interest for the geologically inferred resources.

The mineral occurrence potential within the study area is rated as low, and therefore no mineral occurrence map was prepared for this report.

The following mining claims were on record with the BLM as of January, 1988.

Table 4 - Mining Claims & Leases

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Placer	N/A	9	9	N/A	360	360
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	9	9	N/A	360	360
Oil & Gas Lease	N/A	1	1	N/A	2,560	2,560

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Wilderness Values: Naturalness, opportunities for solitude, and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation will gradually decline over the long-term as a result of projected gradually increasing OHV use and the cumulative effect of this use. This adverse impact is considered minor, since most OHV use occurs in the washes and along existing primitive routes. Wilderness values will also gradually decline as a result of surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development. Current actions within existing management plans provide for conservation of sensitive resources.

2. Impact on BIM Sensitive Plant and Wildlife Species: The proposed action will result in a negligible adverse impact. Monitoring and patrol efforts, and mitigation measures stipulated as part of any authorized activities, will help assure that sensitive species receive adequate protection.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: These opportunities will continue to be available. Existing management plans prescribe use as limited to approved routes of travel.
4. Impact on Saleable/Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for exploration and development of locatable minerals will continue to be available. Interest is expected to remain low for this area. Extraction of saleable materials is a discretionary action and such activities will be discouraged within the EMNSA. Those activities which do occur will be managed under the guidelines established in the EMNSA and CDCA Plans.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Most comments supported inclusion of the area for further study. A recheck of the area confirmed the comments.
2. Study Phase: Five comments were received on the WSA. All favored wilderness designation. The area was said to contain superior geologic, archaeologic and biologic values. Broad expanses of cinder cones and lava flows, the Joshua tree forest and flora and fauna were described. Specifically mentioned were cacti, creosote, cholla, red-tailed hawks, red-shafted flickers, prairie falcons and deer. This WSA was seen as an integral part of the Cima Dome Joshua tree forest and two letters suggested that one large Cima Dome Wilderness Area should be formed. The combined WSA's were said to offer unparalleled opportunities for solitude and wilderness recreation including hiking, camping, backpacking, photography and nature study. The dirt roads which separate the WSA's were said to be undisturbing to the wilderness experience. Grazing was also noted as an unimpacting activity.

One comment was received in response to the Public Input workbook. It suggested eliminating this WSA from consideration because of its proximity to Interstate 15 and the paved Cima Road.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were few comments specific to WSA 235A. This was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-highway vehicle organizations. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting a multiple use designation of moderate use for this area. This was in agreement with the recommendation of the Use Alternative. Conservation representatives did not mention this WSA specifically but generally wanted wilderness recommendation for more WSA's than those recommended in the Balanced or Protection Alternatives.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on the WSA in response to the Proposed Plan which recommended limited use for this area. Both conservation and vehicle recreationists maintained the same positions as for the Draft.

No comments were received from local governments.

Magee/Atkins

CDCA 237

MAGEE-ATKINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-237)

1. THE STUDY AREA —

14,109 acres

The Magee-Atkins WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 13,371 acres of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 627 acres of lands belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totaling approximately 111 acres. No split-estate land exists within the WSA boundaries (See Map 1 and Table 1).

Located three miles south of Interstate 15 at Valley Wells, the WSA is bounded on all sides by 16 miles of unnamed graded dirt roads utilized by mining companies and grazing lessees to access their developments.

Two special designations overlay the WSA. All of the study area is within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated by the Secretary of the Interior in conjunction with approval of the California Desert Plan in 1980. The southeastern portion of the WSA is within the Cima Dome Joshua Tree Forest Unusual Plant Assemblage (UPA). Approximately 500 acres of this study area are included in the larger Cima Dome Outstanding Natural Area and have been withdrawn from mineral entry to protect sensitive resources.

The WSA contains 90% alluvial fans and 10% hills. Topography consists of a gently sloping bajada with three small areas of uplifted hills. Soil is light-colored and sandy. The three hills are about 200 feet higher than the surrounding bajadas and are of a dark gray and reddish mesozoic granitic rock complex.

The WSA is easily accessible from Interstate 15, however the inherent resource values have not provided the attraction necessary to compete with surrounding areas. The most significant resource within this WSA is the dense stand of Joshua trees occurring primarily in the southeastern portion of the WSA. This forest extends eastward into the adjacent Cima Dome WSA where a higher quality representation of this species is encountered. This part of the WSA supports an understory vegetation composed of wild buckwheat, blackbrush, spanish bayonet, big galleta, bush muhly, black-grama, and needlegrass. Other species include paper bag bush, Spiny menodora, turpentine bush, joint fir, and pencil cholla. The northern half of the WSA supports more open stands of Joshua trees with an understory of creosote bush, white bur-sage, brittle brush, cheesebush, Mojave yucca, buckhorn and silver cholla, spiny hopsage, spiny menodora, wild buckwheat, big galleta, sand dropseed, and fluffgrass.

Although numerous wildlife and bird species may be encountered within the Cima Dome Joshua tree forest, sparse vegetation in the majority of the WSA and the lack of permanent water sources throughout precludes the existence of any significant or sensitive wildlife species.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0	acres recommended for wilderness
13,371	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The addition of the Magee-Atkins WSA to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) would not add to the diversity or uniqueness of the system, nor would it add significantly to the wilderness recreation opportunities available in the region. These factors, combined with the fact that this WSA has only marginal wilderness values, led to the nonwilderness recommendation.

The landform and ecosystems exhibited by the study area are already well represented in other areas identified for wilderness preservation. Three nearby WSAs, Cinder Cones WSA (CDCA-239), one-fourth of a mile west; Castle Peaks WSA (CDCA-266), 20 air miles east; and Kingston Mountains WSA (CDCA-222), 20 air miles north, contain a combined total of over 120,000 acres which BLM is recommending for wilderness designation. All are mountainous and all contain examples of the same type of Great Basin-Mojave desert ecosystems found within the Magee-Atkins WSA. There are approximately ten miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

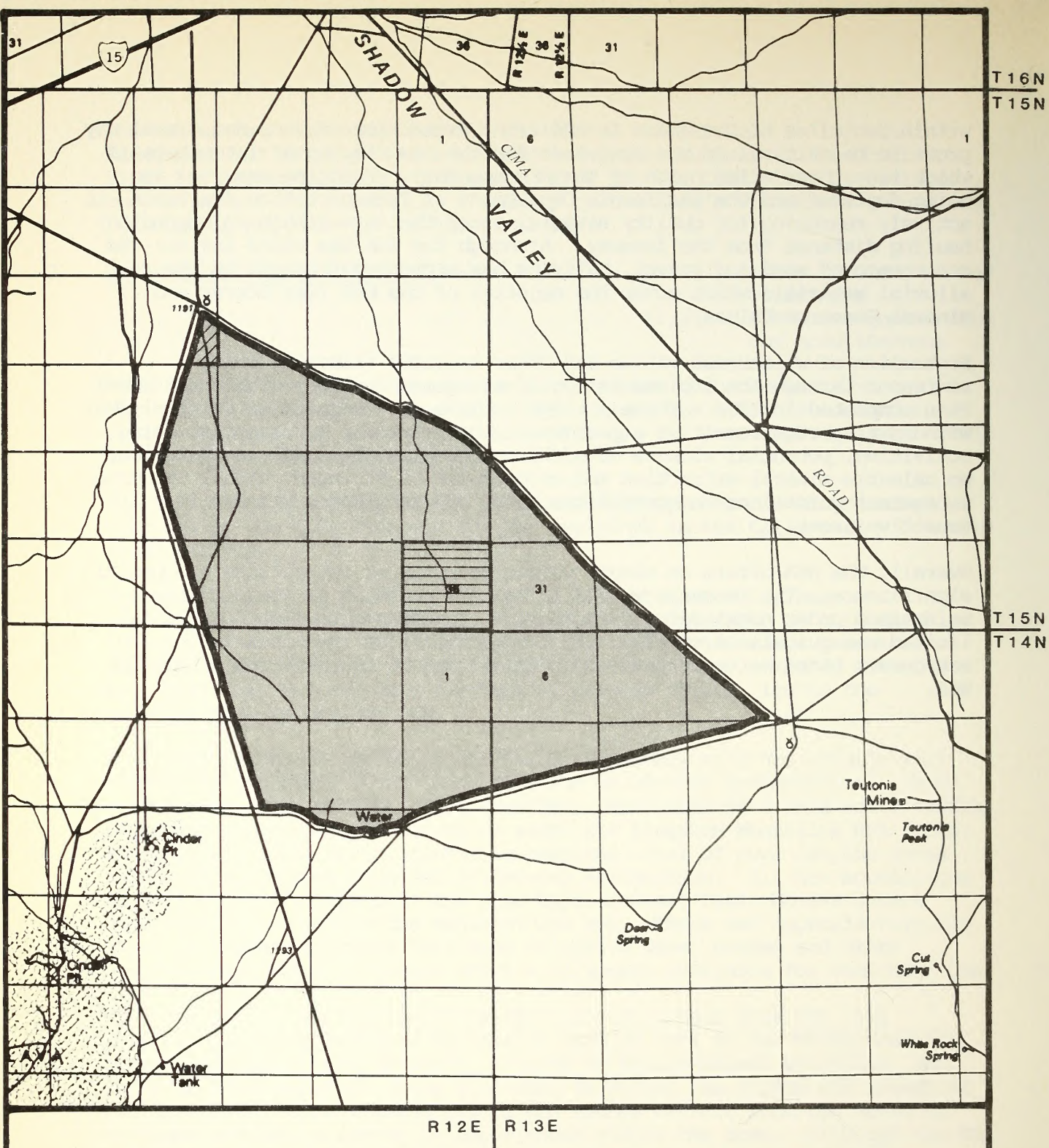
The naturalness and opportunities for solitude within this WSA only minimally meet the criteria defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. Because the study area is small, lacking of topographical variation, and close to Interstate 15, it is difficult to escape the sights and sounds of civilization. These outside sights and sounds detract from the sense of solitude and remoteness to be experienced within the area. Although the WSA is still predominantly natural, the degree of other wilderness values apparent here, including opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, are inferior to many locations within the WSAs discussed above.




A high potential for the occurrence of cinders occurs in the north-central portion of the WSA. Three active cinder mining operations are in existence


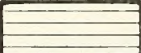
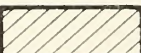
within ten miles of the WSA. In addition, extraction of sand and gravel may prove to be critical in the long-term for the resurfacing of Interstate 15 which lies three miles north of the WSA boundary. Existing reserves are being depleted and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is actively searching for quality material sites that are within an economical hauling distance from the freeway. Although the WSA was rated low for the occurrence of sand and gravel, Caltrans has expressed interest in the alluvial materials which cover the majority of the WSA (See Energy and Mineral Resource Values).

Protection of wilderness values and other resource values is being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the EMNSA Plan completed in 1988. These actions include expansion of existing mineral withdrawals, requirement of a performance bond for all surface disturbing activities, potential closure of additional routes of travel, restrictions on saleable mineral extraction and enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas.

Overall, the WSA offers no single unique features or attractions of special significance. The resource values in the WSA would be managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's limited use guidelines coupled with restrictions outlined in existing management plans serve to lessen potential impacts to resources within the WSA.

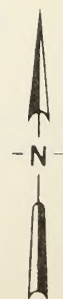


- | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|
|  | NONE | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS | |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS | |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
|  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | STATE |
|  | PRIVATE |

MaGee/Atkins
Proposal
MAP-1

0 1 2 3
 MILES



CDCA-237
 JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	13,371
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		627
Private		111
Total		<u>14,109</u>

<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>

Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0

<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	13,371
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>13,371</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The WSA has been affected primarily by natural forces with man's imprints substantially unnoticeable. A water tank within the southern portion of the WSA along with a primitive route in the north have an insignificant effect upon the naturalness of the WSA.

2. Solitude: The rolling topography and relatively thick growth of Joshua trees allows for good opportunities for solitude within the southern portion of the WSA. The lack of these features and the adjacent noise from Interstate 15 lessens these opportunities within the remainder of the WSA.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities for hiking, backpacking, and nature study are available although limited by the small size and relative flatness of the study area.
4. Special Features: The southern half of this WSA lies within the Cima Dome Joshua tree woodland designated by the California Desert Plan as an Unusual Plant Assemblage (UPA) due to the high density of Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia* var. *jaegeriana*). Approximately 900 acres of this UPA are situated within the Cima Dome Natural Area and 500 acres have been withdrawn from appropriation under the and mining laws.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 13,371 acres of the American Desert/Great Basin Sagebrush ecosystem. Wilderness designation of this WSA would add a new ecosystem to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

<u>Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
	<u>NATIONWIDE</u>			
American Desert/Great Basin Sagebrush	0	0	0	0
	<u>CALIFORNIA</u>			
American Desert/Great Basin Sagebrush	0	0	0	0

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of five major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 11 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, located 160 miles southwest of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Magee-Atkins WSA is manageable as wilderness.

The WSA boundaries are formed by maintained, well-traveled, mining and ranching access routes. Interstate 15, located five miles from the WSA, provides easy access to the northern boundary. The lack of physical barriers along the boundaries would allow motorized vehicle access to and through the WSA. While visitation to the Magee-Atkins WSA is moderate and identification of much of the boundary is facilitated by the use of easily identifiable boundaries, restrictions imposed on vehicle travel by the Wilderness Act will require increased patrol and enforcement efforts to minimize damage to the wilderness resources. The eastern, southern, and western borders of the WSA may be difficult to manage as the adjacent terrain is flat or nearly so.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Magee-Atkins WSA is located in the BLM Cima Dome Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The resource data in the mineral section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III, 1980) for this WSA was not fully analyzed, integrated or interpreted at the time the preliminary suitability recommendation was made. Interpretations of the mineral occurrence potential was based, for the most part, on interpretive data by outside consultants (General Electric, Terra Data Corp., etc.). The EIS indicated that 70 percent of the bedrock in this WSA was covered by alluvium. The EIS indicated that the WSA has potential for geothermal energy and cinders, and that data are insufficient to interpret potential for other mineral resources.

A review of the metal mines and prospect in the G-E-M portion of the EIS (Volume G, Appendix IV) showed no listings for the WSA. Thirteen unpatented placer mining claims were recorded in this WSA as of December, 1979. None were plotted in the most recent San Bernardino County Report by the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) (Wright, L.A., et al, 1953, Volume 49, Journal of Mines and Geology).

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral survey were conducted for this WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. However, a resource status map was prepared by the BLM in 1986 (Evans, J.R., 1986, Mineral Impact Study of a 2,000 square mile area of the East Mojave Desert, San Bernardino County, BLM Report) which compiled the most recent mineral resource data developed by the CDMG).

The report by Evans describes the physiography of the Magee-Atkins WSA as being comprised of Shadow Valley alluvial fill in the north- and the northwest-sloping pediment of Cima Dome in the south. Tertiary-Quaternary cinder cones occur in the northeast part of the WSA along with other Tertiary volcanic rocks and Precambrian outcrops.

The BLM report agreed with the GRA assessment (1980) that considered the WSA as having a potential for the occurrence of cinders. A high potential for the occurrence of cinders was identified in the north-central part of the WSA, as shown on Map 2. The remaining data was considered insufficient or classified as having unknown mineral occurrence potential.

The report by Evans indicated only a low potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources. The area was not considered to have any potential for leasable commodities by either the USGS

(1978) or by the BLM (Evans, 1986). The potential for the occurrence of common mineral materials (e.g., sand and gravel) other than cinders was considered low although Caltrans has expressed an interest in these materials for the maintenance and resurfacing of Interstate 15.

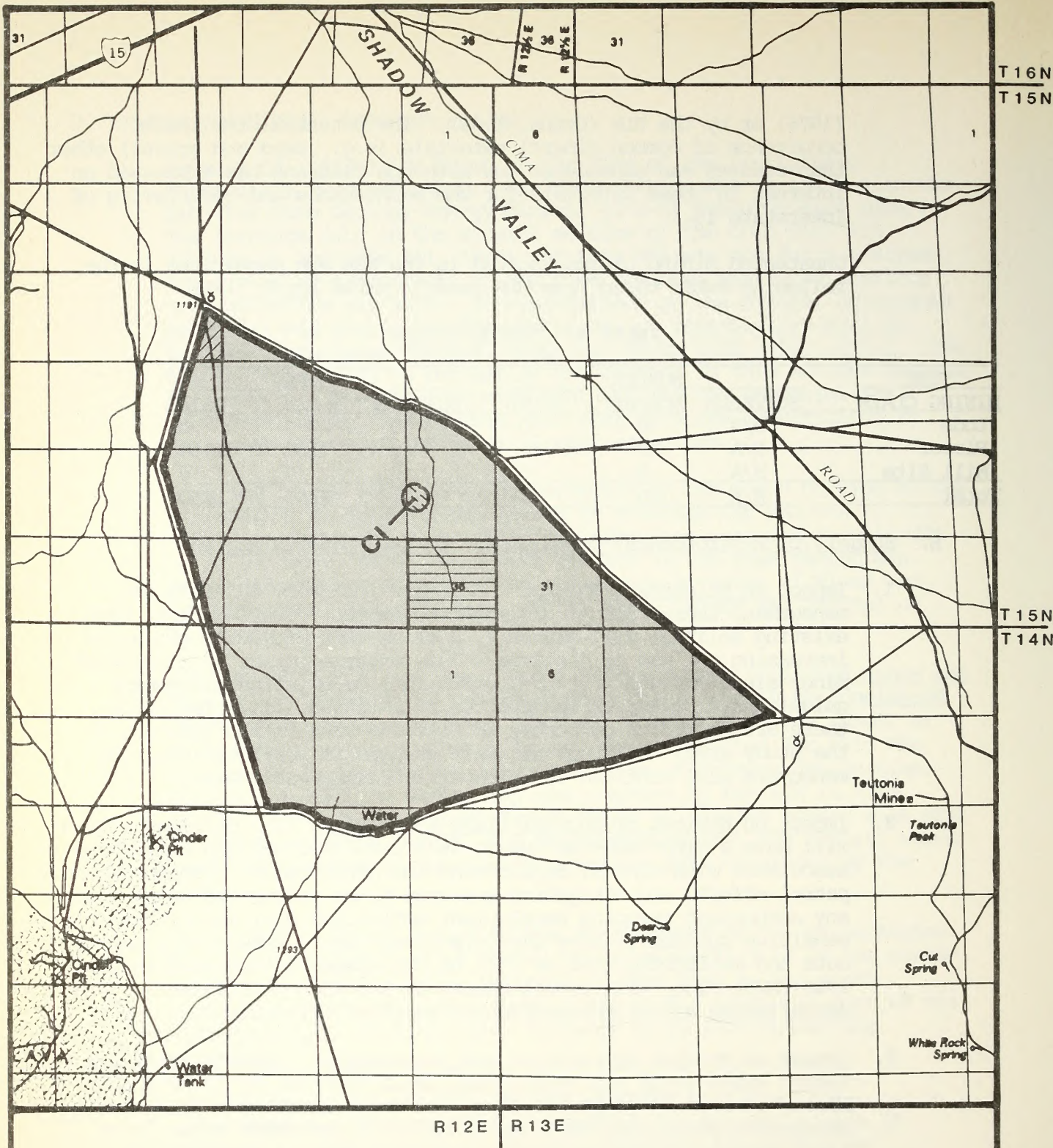
Unpatented mining claims located in the WSA are summarized in the following table taken from BLM records dated April, 1988.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	0	0	0	0	0
Placer	N/A	29	29	0	1160	1160
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	0	0	0
Total	N/A	29	29	0	1160	1160

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Under low-intensity multiple use management there will be no immediate impact. Over the long term, existing solitude will gradually decline with projected gradually increasing OHV use of the area. This adverse impact is considered minor since OHV use would be constrained by existing management guidelines. No impact is expected from mining activities since there are no claims currently on file and very little interest in the study area. Military aircraft engaged in low-level training maneuvers will continue to momentarily disrupt solitude.
2. Impact on Habitat of Unusual Plant Assemblage: The proposed action will have a minor adverse impact as a result of surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development. Monitoring and patrol efforts and mitigation measures to be stipulated as part of any authorized resource development activities will assure that sensitive species receive adequate protection. Extensive baseline data and monitoring studies will be undertaken as outlined in the 1988 EMNSA Plan, with annual review to provide a basis for establishing additional protective measures, if necessary.
3. Impact on Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available. Mining activities would be restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines outlined in the CDCA and EMNSA Plans which limit vehicle access and mitigate adverse effects on sensitive resource values. This impact is expected to be negligible due to the lack of mining claims and overall low mineral potential within the WSA.



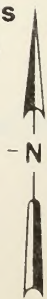
- | | | |
|--|------|---|
| | NONE | Recommended for Wilderness |
| | | Recommended for Non Wilderness |
| | | Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness |
| | | Split Estate |
| | | State |
| | | Private |

Explanation

- | | |
|----------|--|
| | High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| | Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| M | Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area |
| H | High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area |

Commodity Symbols

CI Volcanic Cinders



MaGee/Atkins
Mineral Resource Potential

0 1 2 3
MILES

MAP-2
CDCA-237

4. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the EMNSA Plan. This use is primarily restricted to the three and one-half miles of primitive routes within the northwestern portion of the WSA as rugged terrain and sandy soils prevent inadvertent OHV use throughout most of the WSA.
5. Impact on Materials for Road Maintenance Activities: Any need for materials to maintain highways near the WSA would continue to be addressed based on guidelines established in the EMNSA and CDCA Plans.
6. Impact on Cima Dome Outstanding Natural Area: Impacts are considered to be minor as existing mineral withdrawals, low mineral potential and limited OHV access tend to pose few threats. Existing constraints placed on other resource programs are sufficient to control potential impacting activities.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments discussed natural values that supported inclusion of this area in the wilderness study phase. Field checks verified this opinion.
2. Study Phase: All but one of the forty-two letters received on this WSA favored wilderness designation. Vegetative, geologic, scenic, wildlife, and archaeologic values were mentioned in decreasing order of frequency. A large majority of respondents stressed the importance of the Joshua tree forest, first, as an outstanding growth of Joshua jaegeriana, and second for its screening ability and provision of a feeling of solitude. Other flora often mentioned were the many species of cholla and the unique grasslands. Birds were common in this habitat, particularly red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, the prairie falcon, the red-shafted flicker and the great horned owl. In fact, the area was said to be an outdoor classroom for both naturalists and geologists.

The unique geology of the area was also emphasized--the lava flows, cinder cones and alluvial valleys. All of these features and the special vegetation produced outstanding scenery and opportunities for primitive recreation such as hiking, camping, backpacking, photography, bird watching and nature study.

A few letters suggested combining several wilderness study areas in the immediate area to form one large Cima Dome Wilderness Area. The presence of grazing in the area was felt to be compatible with wilderness by many respondents.

No comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79).

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were few comments specific to this WSA in response to the Draft Plan alternatives. However, this was one of those WSA's opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-highway vehicle organizations. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting multiple use classification of moderate use for this area. This was in agreement with the recommendation of the Use Alternative. Conservation group members were not happy with the non wilderness recommendation for this WSA by all of the alternatives. Many requested that more land be recommended for wilderness, even in the Protection Alternative.
4. Proposed Plan: Conservation organizations asked specifically for stronger management for the Cima Dome area than that offered by the Plans that proposed National Natural Landmark designation, in order to control grazing conflicts. Organizations such as NOC maintained the same position as for the Draft Plan Alternatives.

No comments were received from local governments.

Deer Spring

CDCA 237A

DEER SPRING WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-237A)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 2,416 acres

The WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 2,293 acres of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and 123 acres of lands belonging to the State of California. No split-estate or private lands exist within the WSA boundaries (see Table 1).

The study area is bordered on the north by a water tank maintenance road east to the Valley View Ranch and on the southwest by the dirt road from Deer Spring to the water tank in Section 14, T. 14N. R. 12E., SBEM. The area contains a portion of one section of State land and overall contains less than 5000 acres of land (See Map 1). All of the study area is within the East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated by the Secretary of the Interior in conjunction with approval of the California Desert Plan in 1980. This small triangular-shaped area consists of 75% pediments and 25% hills and includes the northwest slope of Cima Dome. The visual aspect of the WSA is dominated by the presence of dense stands of Joshua trees. Additionally, 250 acres within the WSA are included within the larger Cima Dome Outstanding Natural Area and have been withdrawn from mineral entry for the protection of recreation and public values. The understory vegetation is representative of creosote bush scrub and big galleta scrub-steppe. No Federal- or State-listed rare, threatened or endangered plants or BLM sensitive plant or wildlife species are known to occur in this WSA. No cultural resources or Native American values have been documented for this WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 0 acres recommended for wilderness
2,293 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

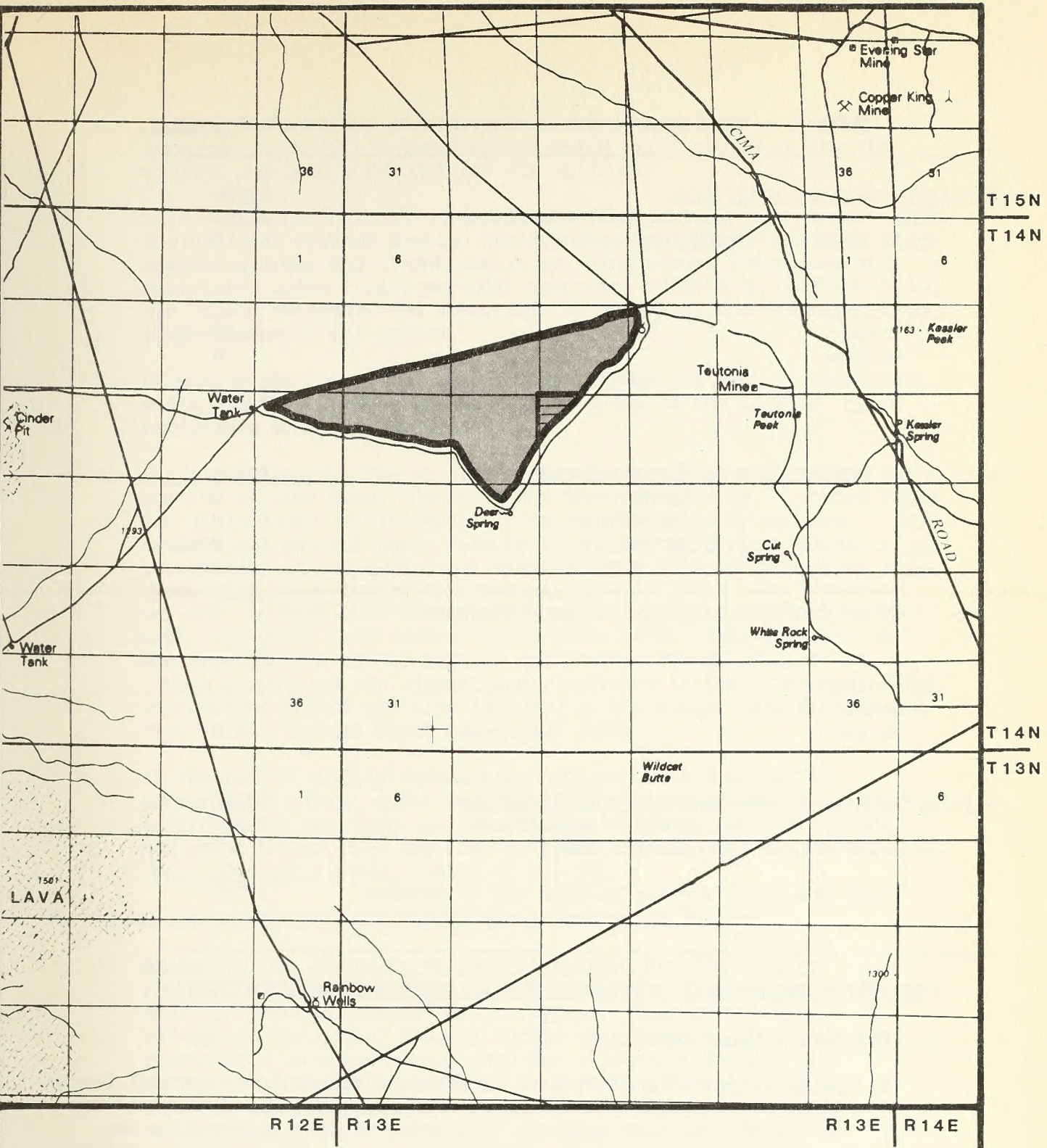
The no-wilderness recommendation is based upon the following rationale: (1) the landforms and ecosystem of the Deer Spring WSA are already well represented in other areas recommended for wilderness designation, and (2) the special features of this WSA can be protected through the current mineral withdrawal.

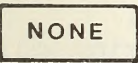



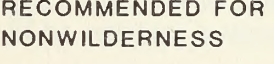
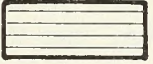

The addition of this WSA to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) would not add to the diversity or uniqueness of the system, nor would it add significantly to the wilderness recreational opportunities available within the region. The Deer Spring WSA is typical of the topography and vegetation displayed in the surrounding mountains and valleys. Nearby WSA's recommended for wilderness designation display the same physical and biological resources found within this study area. There are ten BLM study areas recommended for wilderness designation within 50 miles of the Deer Spring WSA. These areas possess very high quality wilderness values and provide a good representative sample of the Mojave and Great Basin Deserts in their natural conditions. There are no known primitive routes of travel within the WSA.

The WSA receives low recreation use (less than 500 visitor-use days annually), with most use occurring along the perimeters of the study area as no routes of travel exist within the WSA and little, if any, cross-country use occurs. Demands for primitive recreational opportunities are almost nonexistent. The area receives little use, presumably because there is little to attract visitors, who are drawn instead to other nearby areas which contain special features.

Protection of wilderness values and other resource values is being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the EMNSA Plan completed in 1988. These actions include expansion of the existing mineral withdrawal, closure of additional routes of travel and enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas.

The resource values in the WSA would be managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's limited use guidelines coupled with restrictions outlined in existing management plans serve to lessen potential impacts to resources within the WSA. Wilderness designation as an additional protective measure is unnecessary since 50 percent of the study area is currently withdrawn from mineral entry and only one mining claim encompassing 40 acres is recorded for the study area.



- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|---|--------------|
|  | NONE |  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE |  | PRIVATE |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS | | | | |

**Deer Spring
Proposal
MAP-1**

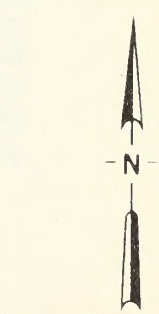
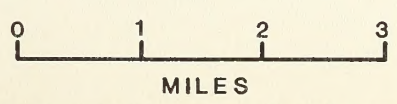


TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	2,293
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		123
Private		0
Total		<u>2,416</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	2,293
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>2,293</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The study area is affected primarily by natural forces with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable. Man's historic use in the WSA has been grazing. The dense vegetation provides the screening to maintain the wilderness values. Three windmills are located in the extreme eastern corner of the study area, but because of the thick vegetation, these grazing improvements are well screened from the remainder of the area. Assuming that grazing will be the principal activity by man in the WSA, and that this activity will continue at the same rate, the wilderness values will not be significantly impacted.

2. Solitude: The thick Joshua tree forest and the gently sloping topography provide isolated spaces which offer seclusion for the visitor and good opportunities for solitude.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Though the area is relatively small, unconfined movement is available due to the lack of noticeable man-made intrusions.
4. Special Features: The study area encompasses the northwestern portion of Cima Dome. Overall, the dome covers some 75 square miles and is included in five WSAs. It is considered to be the most symmetrical natural domal feature in the United States and in recognition of its geological significance, 18,390 acres were designated as an Outstanding Natural Area in 1972. The withdrawn acreage includes over 50% of the overall Deer Spring WSA which has been segregated from mineral entry since 1972. Additionally, the WSA supports one of the largest and densest stands of Joshua tree (Yucca brevifolia var. jaegeriana) woodlands in the southwest. The Joshua tree stands are also included in the larger Cima Dome Joshua Tree forest Unusual Plant Assemblage (UPA).

In the better quality Joshua tree habitat, mule deer may be encountered. Dove, quail and chukar as well as raptors such as red-tailed hawks, American kestrels, Cooper's hawks, prairie falcons, and great horned owls may also be found. Sawin's hawks have been observed within several miles of the WSA.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 2,293 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. This province is widespread throughout the California desert and is currently well represented in areas recommended for wilderness designation. Although the density is greater in this WSA, Joshua trees are reported in nearly each WSA in eastern San Bernardino County, California.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,265,617
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,651,813

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of six major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of ten BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation; nine are within the CDCA and one is administered by the Las Vegas District in Nevada. The closest designated wilderness area is Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 175 miles south of the Deer Spring WSA.

C. Manageability

The Deer Spring WSA is manageable as wilderness. Readily definable boundaries, the current withdrawal which covers 50% of the WSA, coupled with the lack of conflicting resource uses positively influence the area's manageability.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Deer Spring WSA is in the BLM Cima Dome Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M data in the Wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 indicated that the resource data for this WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated, and interpreted. The G-E-M data in the EIS did state that the WSA had potential for geothermal energy, uranium and thorium. Data was insufficient to evaluate the potential of other mineral resources. On December 12, 1979, no unpatented mining claims were recorded with BLM in the WSA.

Mineral resource data for the Cima Dome GRA file was not available for review during this summary writing process. Therefore, verification of the 1980 EIS G-E-M conclusions was not possible.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral surveys were conducted in this WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

A study of the East Mojave National Scenic Area, which is included this WSA, was made by the BLM in 1986. This study compiled data collected and analyzed by the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) for their nonurban mineral land assessment. The findings in this study were published as a BLM report (Evans, J.R., 1986, Mineral Impact Study of a 2,000 Square Mile Area of the East Mojave Desert San Bernardino County, California). The BLM report used the CDMG Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) classification scheme with respect to the presence, absence or likely occurrence of mineral deposits. The BLM report indicated that the Quaternary alluvium in the west half and the Mesozoic Tuetonia quartz monzonite intrusive, which outcrops in the eastern half of the WSA, had an unknown potential for mineral resources.

The area was classified prospectively valuable for geothermal resources by the USGS (1982). This area is considered as having a low potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources based

solely on geologic inference. The potential for the occurrence of common mineral materials (e.g., sand and gravel) is determined under the BLM mineral occurrence classification system to be low due to the unknown quality of the geologically inferred resources.

As of December, 1987, there was one unpatented 40-acre placer mining claim located in the western portion of the WSA (Table 4). A mineral resource potential map was not prepared for the WSA because only low mineral potential exists.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	0	0	0	0	0	0
Placer	0	1	1	0	40	40
Mill Site	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1	1	0	40	40

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Under low-intensity management, there will be no immediate impact. This level of impact is expected to continue since no mineral development may be allowed on over 50% of the study area and the stringent guidelines established on the activities of other impacting resource programs.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development will be available within the 50 percent of the study area not formally withdrawn from mineral entry.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue along the perimeter of the study area. No routes of travel are located within the WSA and virtually no motorized vehicle use occurs within the study area.
4. Impact on Mule Deer Habitat: Impacts to mule deer and their habitat will be negligible as a result of the low levels of use.
5. Impact on Sensitive Plant Species/Habitat: Localized impacts caused by motorized vehicle access will have a minor negative impact. Existing management guidelines are designed to protect these species throughout the WSA.
6. Impact on Cima Dome Outstanding Natural Area: Impacts are considered to be minor as existing mineral withdrawals, low mineral potential and limited OHV access tend to pose few threats. Existing constraints placed on other resource programs are sufficient to control potential impacting activities.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments discussed natural values that supported inclusion of this area in the wilderness study process.
2. Study Phase: Of the 22 letters received on this WSA, 18 favored wilderness designation. Vegetative, geologic, scenic, wildlife and archaeological values were mentioned. A large number of respondents stressed the importance of the Joshua tree forest, first, as an outstanding growth of Yucca brevifolia var. jaegeriana and second, for its screening effect and provision of a feeling of solitude. Other flora often mentioned were the many species of cholla cactus and the unique grasslands. Birds were common in this habitat, particularly red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, prairie falcons, red-shafted flicker and the great horned owl.

The unique geology of the area was also emphasized--the lava flows, Cima Dome, and alluvial valleys. All of these features and the special vegetation produced outstanding scenery and opportunities for primitive recreation such as camping, hiking, backpacking, photography, bird watching and nature study.

Several letters suggested combining the unnumbered roadless areas, although they were less than 5000 acres, into a large Cima Dome wilderness area. The roads between areas were described as infrequently used and unnoticeable (These boundary roads are utilized by ranchers to maintain range improvements and by recreationists utilizing two-wheel drive or OHV's for access into the more frequently visited areas of Cima Dome). The four letters opposing wilderness designation dealt mainly with grazing and minerals. Silver, lead and zinc were specific minerals listed along with geothermal potential. Sights and sounds felt to detract from wilderness potential were transmission lines, roads, range facilities, and nearby towns. One letter complained about the total area being less than 5000 acres.

No comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were no comments specific to this WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. This was one of the many WSAs opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-road vehicle organizations. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting multiple use classification of "moderate use" for this area. This was in agreement with the recommendation of the Use Alternative. Conservation groups wanted protection for this area; some accepted the recommendation of the Balanced and Protection Alternatives of "limited use" while others wanted wilderness designation.
4. Proposed Plan: Conservation organizations asked specifically for stronger management for the Cima Dome area than that offered by the Plan's proposed National Natural Landmark designation, in order to control grazing conflicts. Organizations such as NOC maintained the same position as for the Draft Plan Alternatives.

No comments were received from local governments.

Valley View

CDCA 237B

VALLEY VIEW WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-237B)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

3,233 acres

The Valley View WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 3,233 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). No State, private or split-estate lands exist within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 and Table 1).

This triangular-shaped area north of Cima Dome is bordered on the southwest by a dirt road running northwest from Valley View Ranch; on the north by a dirt road and on the east by a water tank maintenance road. This small area is entirely public land.

All of the study area is within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated by the Secretary of the Interior in conjunction with approval of the California Desert Plan in 1980. Roughly 200 acres located within T. 14 N., R. 13 E., Sections 3 and 4, are included within the larger Cima Dome Natural Area and National Recreation Lands that have been withdrawn from mineral entry for the protection of recreation and public values.

The WSA consists entirely of alluvial fans extending northwest from Cima Dome. The area slopes gently, the relative flatness broken only by a few shallow washes. Elevations range from 4200 feet in the northwest to 5000 feet near Valley View ranch in the southern portion of the study area. Vegetation is predominately Joshua tree woodland with an understory representative of creosote bush scrub, and big galleta scrub-steppe. No BLM sensitive plant or wildlife species, and no Federal or State listed rare, threatened, or endangered plant or wildlife species are known to occur in this WSA. There are no known cultural or Native American resources represented within the Valley View WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0 acres recommended for wilderness

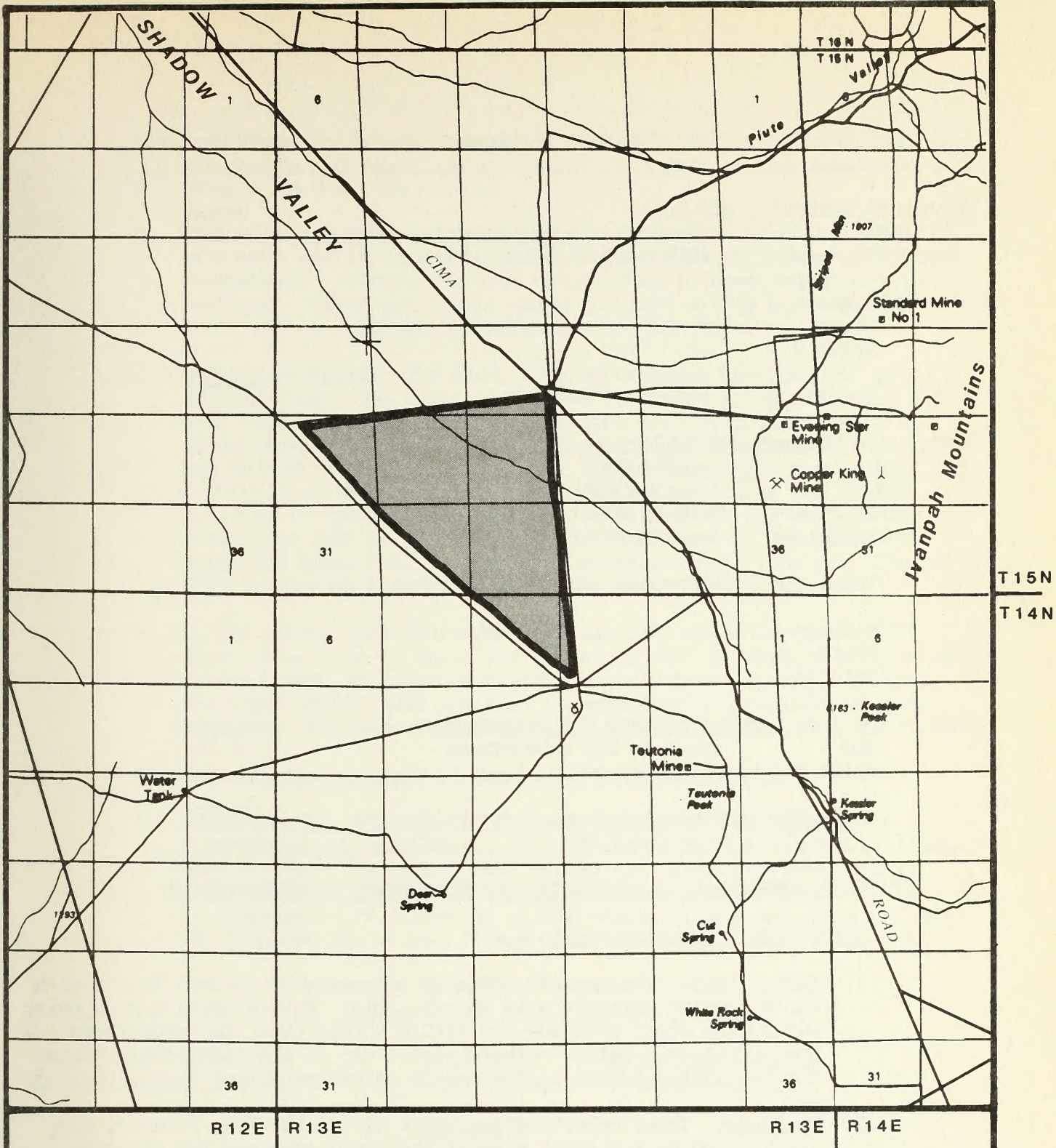
3,233 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

This area is not recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) because designation would not add a unique or significant ecosystem to the NWPS that is not already represented. The WSA's wilderness values are minimal and would not add significantly to the wilderness recreational opportunities within the area. The resources within the WSA are an extension of those represented in the Cima Dome Natural Area located south of the Valley View WSA. The Cima Dome Natural Area includes 18,390 acres currently withdrawn from mineral entry. There are no known primitive routes of travel within the WSA.

Protection of wilderness values and other resource values is being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the EMNSA plan completed in 1988. These actions include expansion of the existing Cima Dome mineral withdrawal, closure of additional routes of travel and enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas. The resource values in the WSA would be managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's limited use guidelines coupled with restrictions outlined in existing management plans serve to lessen potential impacts to resources within the WSA.



NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



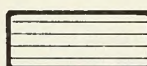
RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



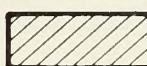
LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



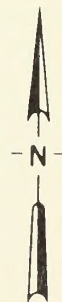
SPLIT ESTATE



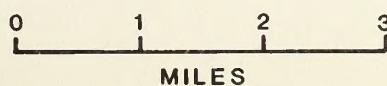
STATE



PRIVATE



Valley View
Proposal
MAP-1



CDCA-237B
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	3,233
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
Total		<u>3,233</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	3,233
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>3,233</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area is affected primarily by natural forces with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable. Cattle grazing does exist within the study area but has little effect upon the naturalness. One corral is located in the southern tip of the study area. This too has little affect on the area's naturalness.
2. Solitude: These opportunities exist within the WSA, however, they are limited by the small size of the study area and the relative lack of topographical variation. The WSA's proximity to the paved well-travelled Cima Road also negatively impacts opportunities for solitude.

This WSA is periodically overflown by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and

associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The area's flat terrain precludes difficult and technical types of primitive or unconfined recreation. Because the area contains no interesting or unique features, infrequent hikers using this WSA simply pass through on their way to destinations elsewhere on Cima Dome.
4. Special Features: The study area encompasses the northern portion of Cima Dome. The Dome covers some 75 square miles extending into five WSAs. It is considered to be the most symmetrical natural domal feature in the United States and supports one of the largest and densest stands of Joshua tree (Yucca brevifolia var. jaegeriana) woodlands in the southwest. The Joshua tree stands are also included in the larger Cima Dome Joshua Tree Forest Unusual Plant Assemblage (UPA). In order to provide protection for these sensitive resources, 18,390 acres encompassing all or portions of five WSA's have been withdrawn from mineral entry.

In the better quality Joshua tree habitat, mule deer may be encountered. Dove, quail and chukar as well as raptors such as red-tailed hawks, American kestrels, Cooper's hawks, prairie falcons, and great horned owls may also be encountered. Swainson's hawks have been observed within several miles of the WSA.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 3,233 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. This province is well represented in areas recommended for wilderness designation. Designation of this area as wilderness would not add diversity to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,264,676
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,650,872

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of six major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of ten BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation; nine are within the CDCA and one is administered by the Las Vegas District in Nevada. The closest designated wilderness area is Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 175 miles south of the Valley View WSA.

C. Manageability

The Valley View WSA is manageable as wilderness. Readily definable boundaries and the lack of conflicting resource uses positively influence the area's manageability.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Valley View WSA is in the BLM Cima Dome Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M data in the Wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 indicated that the mineral resource data for this WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated and interpreted at

the time the wilderness recommendation was made. The G-E-M data in the EIS did state that the western half of the WSA had potential for geothermal energy resources. Data was insufficient to evaluate the potential of other mineral resources. No information on the number of unpatented mining claims recorded with BLM in the WSA was reported in the EIS.

Mineral resource data for the Cima Dome GRA file was not available for review during this summary process. Therefore, verification of the 1980 EIS G-E-M conclusions was not possible.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral surveys were conducted in this WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

A study of the East Mojave National Scenic Area, which included the WSA, was made by the BLM in 1986. This study compiled data collected and analyzed by the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) for their nonurban mineral land assessment. The findings in this study were published as a BLM report (Evans, J.R., (1986), Mineral Impact Study of a 2,000 Square Mile Area of the East Mojave Desert, San Bernardino County, California). The BLM report used the CDMG's Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) classification scheme with respect to the presence, absence or likely occurrence of mineral deposits. The report by Evans showed that the WSA was classified as having unknown mineral occurrence potential.

The entire WSA was classified prospectively valuable for geothermal resources by the USGS (1982) which represents a change from the G-E-M data in the 1980 EIS. However, there has been no expressed interest in exploration or development for geothermal resources, and no direct physical evidence in the record of geothermal resources. Under the BLM classification system, this area is considered to have a low potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources, based solely on geologic inference. The potential for the occurrence of common mineral materials (e.g., sand and gravel) is determined under the BLM mineral resource classification system to be low due to lack of interest for the geologically inferred resources. A mineral resource potential map was not prepared for this WSA because only low mineral potential exists.

As of December, 1987, no unpatented mining claims were on record within the WSA.

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Under low intensity management there will be no immediate impact. Based upon the lack of interest in the area for mineral exploration and the low levels of recreational use involving motorized vehicles, a negligible impact to the wilderness values is likely to occur.
2. Impact on Unusual Plant Assemblage: The proposed action will have a negligible impact. Monitoring and patrol efforts and mitigation measures stipulated as part of any authorized resource development activities will assure that sensitive species receive adequate protection. Extensive baseline data and monitoring studies will be undertaken as outlined in the 1988 EMNSA Plan, with annual review to provide a basis for establishing additional protective measures, if necessary.
3. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available. No claims are currently located within the study area and this lack of interest is expected to continue. Mining activities would be prohibited on the 200 acres currently withdrawn from mineral entry.
4. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the EMNSA Plan.
5. Impact on Mule Deer Habitat: Impacts to mule deer and their habitat will be negligible, consisting of minor site specific habitat loss as a result of surface disturbance associated with off-highway vehicle (OHV) use.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments discussed natural values that supported inclusion of this area in the wilderness study process.

2. Study Phase: Of the 22 letters received on this WSA, 18 favored wilderness designation. Vegetative, geologic, scenic, wildlife and archaeologic values were mentioned. A large number of respondents stressed the importance of the Joshua tree forest, first, as an outstanding growth of Yucca brevifolia var. jaegeriana and second, for its screening effect and provision of a feeling of solitude. Other flora often mentioned were the many species of cholla cactus and the unique grasslands. Birds were common in this habitat, particularly red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, prairie falcons, red-shafted flicker and the great horned owl.

The unique geology of the area was also emphasized--the lava flows, Cima Dome, and alluvial valleys. All of these features and the special vegetation produced outstanding scenery and opportunities for primitive recreation such as camping, hiking, backpacking, photography, bird watching and nature study.

Several letters suggested combining the unnumbered roadless areas, although they were less than 5000 acres, into a large Cima Dome wilderness area. The roads between areas were described as infrequently used and unnoticeable (these boundary roads are utilized by ranchers to maintain range improvements and by recreationists utilizing two-wheel drive or OHV's for access into the more frequently visited areas of Cima Dome). The four letters opposing wilderness designation dealt mainly with grazing and minerals. Silver, lead and zinc were specific minerals listed along with geothermal potential. Sights and sounds felt to detract from wilderness potential were transmission lines, roads, range facilities, and nearby towns. One letter complained about the total area being less than 5000 acres.

No comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were no comments specific to this WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. This was one of the many WSAs opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-highway vehicle organizations. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting multiple use classification of moderate use for this area. This was in agreement with the recommendation of the Use Alternative. Conservation groups wanted protection for this area; some accepted the recommendation of the Balanced and Protection Alternatives of limited use while others wanted wilderness designation.
4. Proposed Plan: Conservation organizations asked specifically for stronger management for the Cima Dome area than that offered by the Plan's proposed National Natural Landmark designation, in order to control grazing conflicts. Organizations such as NOC maintained the same position as for the Draft Plan Alternatives.

No comments were received from local governments.

Teutonia Peak

CDCA 238A

TEUTONIA PEAK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-238A)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 3,284 acres

The WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 2,783 acres of public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 484 acres of lands belonging to the State of California and 17 acres of private land. No split-estate land exists within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The southern and western boundaries of this triangular-shaped area are formed by maintained roads utilized by grazing lessees for maintenance of range improvements located within the WSA and by recreationists for access onto Cima Dome. The eastern boundary skirts the ridgetop of Teutonia Peak excluding the Teutonia Mine, old buildings, several mine shafts and numerous shallow prospect holes.

The WSA consists of 75% pediments and 25% hills. The study area includes a major portion of Cima Dome and Teutonia Peak. Topography consists of the high, broad, rounded dome itself and three rocky ridges which comprise Teutonia Peak and rise abruptly from the surrounding smooth slope. The visual aspect of the WSA is dominated by the presence of dense stands of Joshua trees. The understory vegetation is representative of creosote bush scrub and big galleta scrub-steppe. No Federal- or State-listed rare, threatened or endangered plants or BLM sensitive plant or wildlife species are known to occur in this WSA. No cultural resources or Native American values have been documented for this WSA.

All of the study area is within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated by the Secretary of the Interior in conjunction with approval of the California Desert Plan in 1980. Additionally, all Federal land acres within the WSA are included within the larger Cima Dome Natural Area and National Recreation Lands and have been withdrawn from mineral entry for the protection of recreation and public values.

The WSA was studied under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE —

0 acres recommended for
wilderness
2,783 BLM acres recommended for
nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

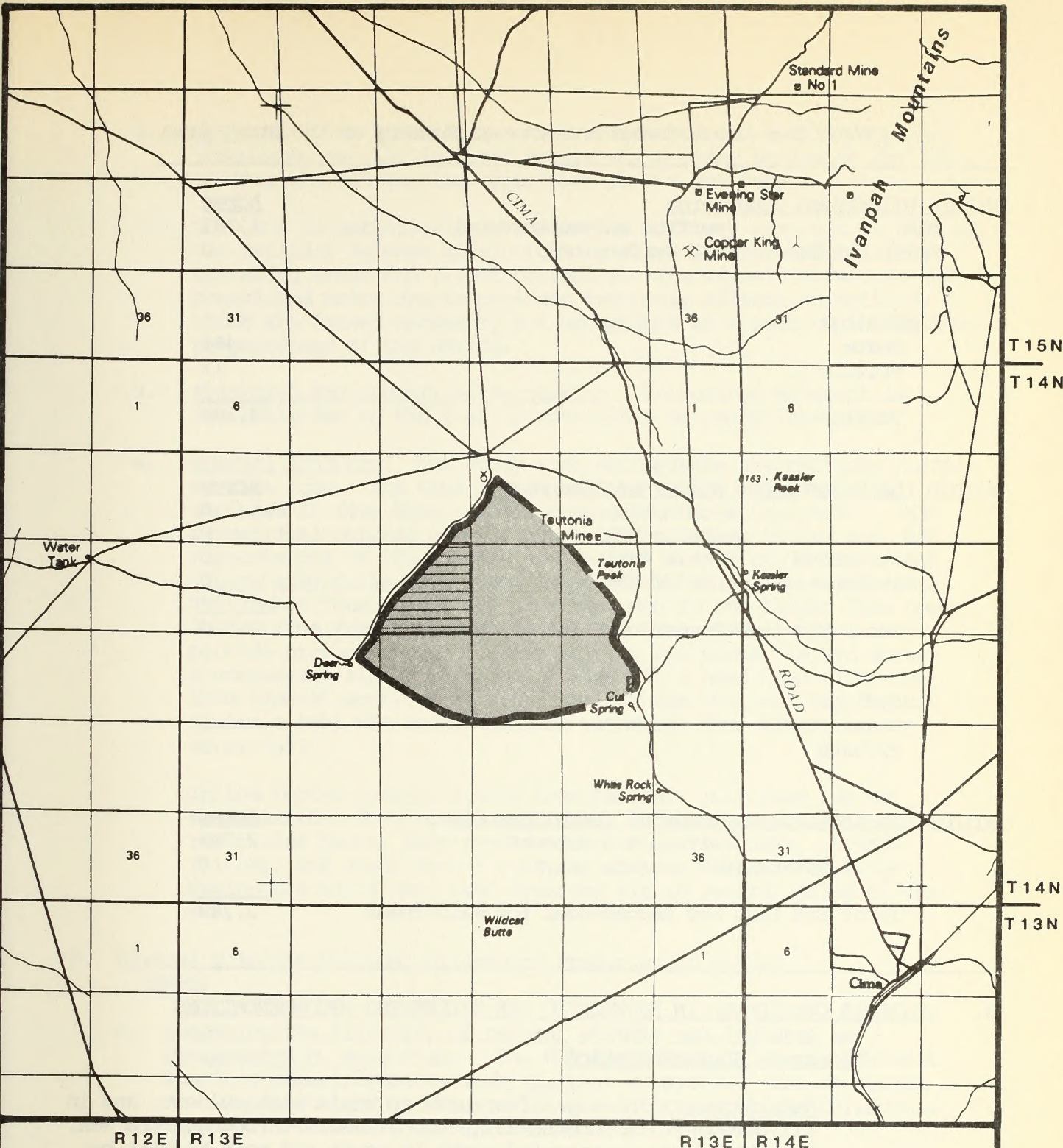
The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

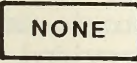



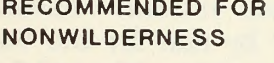


The no-wilderness recommendation is based upon the following rationale: (1) the landforms and ecosystem of the Teutonia Peak WSA are already well represented in other areas recommended for wilderness designation; and (2) the special features of this WSA can be protected through the current mineral withdrawal.

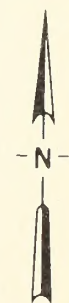
The addition of this WSA to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) would not add to the diversity or uniqueness of the system, nor would it add significantly to the wilderness recreation opportunities available within the region. The Teutonia Peak WSA is typical of the topography and vegetation displayed in the surrounding mountains and valleys. Nearby WSA's recommended for wilderness designation display the same physical and biological resources found within this study area. There are ten BLM study areas recommended for wilderness designation within 50 miles of the Teutonia Peak WSA. These ten areas possess very high quality wilderness values and provide a good representative sample of the Mojave and Great Basin Deserts in their natural state. There are no known primitive routes of travel within the WSA.

Protection of wilderness values and other resource values is being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the EMNSA plan completed in 1988. These actions include expansion of existing mineral withdrawals, restrictions on the use of firearms, closure of additional routes of travel and enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas.

The resource values in the WSA would be managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's limited use guidelines coupled with restrictions outlined in existing management plans serve to lessen potential impacts to resources within the WSA. Wilderness designation as an additional protective measure is unnecessary since the current withdrawal encompasses all public land acres within the WSA. No resource uses, other than those with valid existing rights, would be permitted.



- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|---|--------------|
|  | NONE |  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE |  | PRIVATE |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS | | | | |



**Teutonia Peak
Proposal
MAP-1**

CDCA-238A
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	2,783
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		484
Private		17
Total		<u>3,284</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	2,783
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>2,783</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: In only a few cases is man's work evident, and in all cases, it is substantially unnoticeable throughout the WSA. The study area is bisected north to south and east to west by seven miles of fenceline which extends over the top of Cima Dome. Two wells, a maintained spring and corral are located near Cut Spring in the southeastern corner of the WSA. Man's historic use in the WSA has been grazing. The dense vegetation has provided the screening to maintain the wilderness values. Assuming that grazing will be the principal activity by man in the WSA and that this activity will continue at the same rate, the wilderness values will not be significantly impacted.

2. Solitude: The thick Joshua tree forest and the gently sloping topography provide isolated spaces which offer seclusion for the visitor and outstanding opportunities for solitude.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Unconfined movement is available due to the lack of noticeable man-made intrusions.
4. Special Features: The study area encompasses the northern portion of Cima Dome. The Dome covers some 75 square miles and is included in five WSAs. It is considered to be the most symmetrical natural domal feature in the United States and supports one of the largest and densest stands of Joshua tree (Yucca brevifolia var. jaegeriana) woodlands in the southwest. The Joshua tree stands are also included in the larger Cima Dome Joshua Tree forest Unusual Plant Assemblage (UPA). In order to provide protection for these sensitive resources, 18,390 acres encompassing all or portions of five WSA's have been withdrawn from mineral entry. The withdrawn acreage includes the entire Teutonia Peak WSA which has been withdrawn from mineral entry since 1972.

In the better quality Joshua tree habitat, mule deer may be encountered. Dove, quail and chukar as well as raptors such as red-tailed hawks, American kestrels, Cooper's hawks, prairie falcons, and great horned owls may also be encountered. Swainson's hawks have been observed within several miles of the WSA.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 2,783 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush (Larrea) ecosystem. The ecosystem contained within this WSA is widespread throughout the California Desert and is currently represented within the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
NATIONWIDE				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,265,127
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,651,323

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of six major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of ten BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation; nine are within the CDCA and one is administered by the Las Vegas District in Nevada. The closest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 175 miles south of the Teutonia Peak WSA.

C. Manageability

Teutonia Peak WSA is manageable as wilderness. Readily definable boundaries, the current withdrawal which covers the entire WSA, coupled with the lack of conflicting resource uses positively influence the area's manageability.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Teutonia Peak WSA is located in the BLM Cimarron Dome Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). Volume B, Appendix III of the California Desert plan EIS (1980) indicated that the data in the GRA file for the Teutonia Peak WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated, and interpreted at the time of the recommendation. However, the EIS indicated that the WSA had potential for uranium and thorium in the eastern half of the WSA, lead, silver, and fluorite in the northeastern part, and geothermal energy in the western quarter of the WSA. There were no claims recorded in this WSA as of December, 1979.

Data in the 1980 GRA file verified the statements in the EIS. The uranium-thorium potential mentioned in the 1980 G-E-M assessment is based on an airborne anomaly (NURE) and occurs mainly over Mesozoic plutonic rocks. Minor thorium mineralization in these plutonic rocks is thought to cause the anomalies.

The Rainbow group of small gold mines lies just outside the southwest corner of the WSA where gold, copper and lead minerals occur in quartz veins in quartz monzonite. One hundred and thirty-four tons of gold ore was reportedly produced prior to 1951 (Wright, L.A., 1953, San Bernardino County Report, California, California Division of Mines, Journal of Mines and Geology, Volume 49).

The Teutonia Mine, located about one-quarter mile from the northeastern boundary of the WSA, produced argentiferous galena from a five-foot wide quartz vein in quartz monzonite. The vein strikes northwest and in addition to containing silver and lead minerals, copper and zinc mineralization also occurs. In 1908 the mine is reported to have produced approximately 112 tons of ore containing 100 to 150 ounces per ton of silver and several percent of lead per ton (Wright, 1953).

On the basis of the proximity of the Teutonia Mine to the northeast boundary of the WSA, a small area, near this mine and adjacent to the WSA boundary, is considered to have a moderate potential for the occurrence of fluorite, lead, silver, copper and zinc according to the BLM classification.

Common mineral materials (e.g., sand and gravel) are thought to have only a low potential for occurrence under the BLM classification system as there are no large dry washes in the area and the pediment cover is not considered by the BLM to be a good sand and gravel source.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines survey was conducted in this area because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. However, a mineral resource status map was prepared by the BLM (Evans, J.R., 1986, Mineral Impact Study of a 2,000 Square Mile Area of the East Mojave Desert, BLM Report) based on mineral inventory work conducted by the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG). This report indicated that as of 1986, there was no occurrence potential for locatable minerals in this WSA. There has been no exploration for geothermal resources nor has interest been expressed for obtaining geothermal permits. The potential for other leasable commodities is largely unknown.

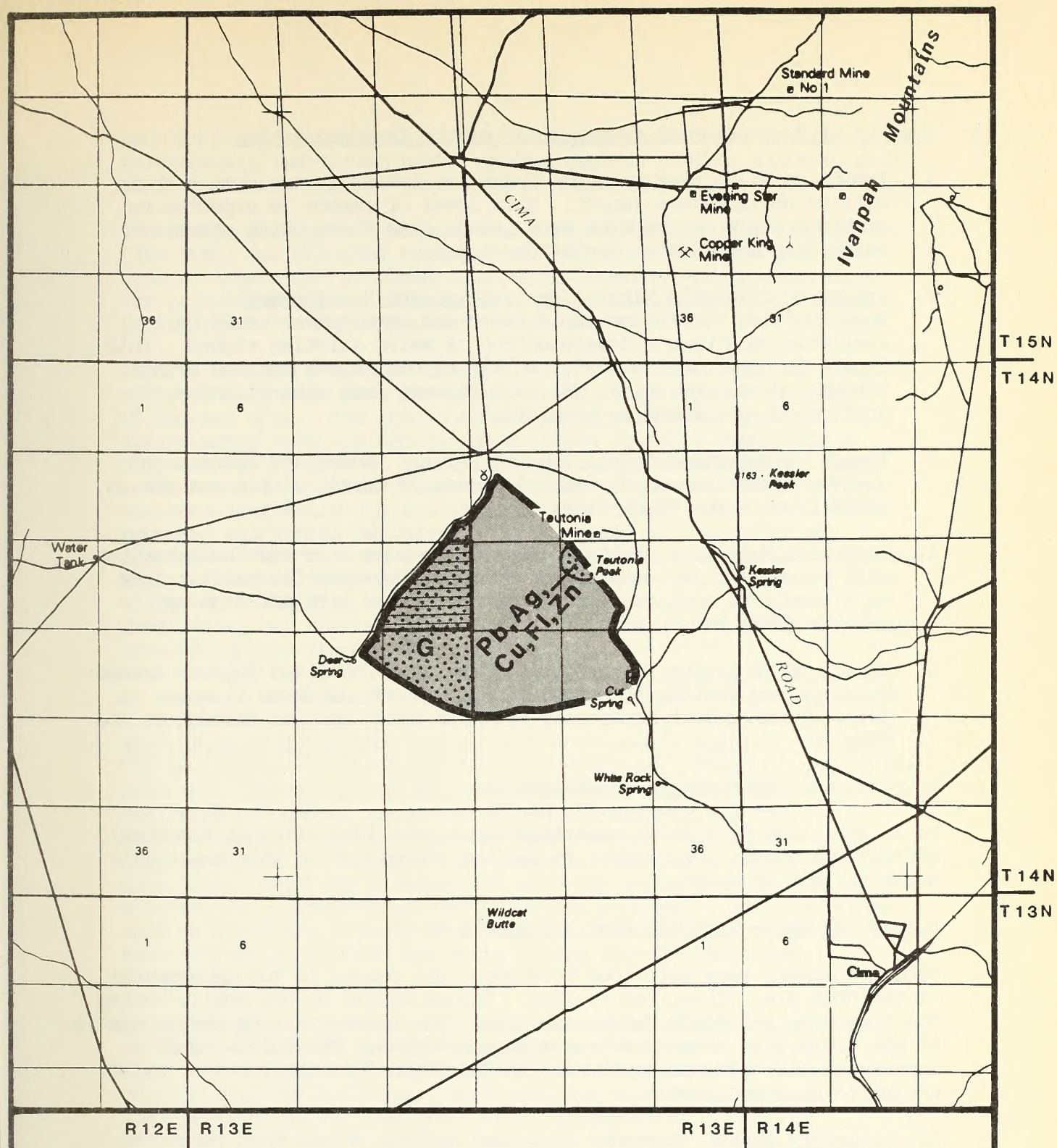
The western half of the WSA was classified by the BLM (1982) as being prospectively valuable for geothermal resources. Under the BLM classification system, the western half of the WSA is classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources.

The mineral resource occurrence potential classifications shown on Map 2 are based on the GRA file data and work compiled by Evans, using the BLM classification system.

As of December, 1987 no plans of operation have been filed with the BLM. Unpatented mining claims in the WSA are summarized by the following table taken from BLM records dated December 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	2	2	N/A	40	40
Placer	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	2	2	N/A	40	40



R12E R13E

R13E R14E

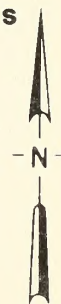
- NONE** Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

Explanation

- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- Ag** Silver
- Cu** Copper
- Fl** Fluorite/spar
- G** Geothermal
- Pb** Lead



Teutonia Peak Mineral Resource Potential



MAP-2
CDCA-238A

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Under low-intensity management there will be no immediate impact. This level of impact is expected to continue since no resource uses, other than those which possess valid existing rights, may be developed.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would be available only upon a determination of valid existing rights. This impact is negligible as only two mining claims are located within the WSA. Since the entire WSA is withdrawn from mineral entry, staking of new claims is prohibited.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the EMNSA Plan.
4. Impact on Mule Deer Habitat: Impacts to mule deer and their habitat will be negligible, consisting of minor site-specific habitat loss as a result of surface disturbance associated with off-highway vehicle (OHV) use.
5. Impact on Sensitive Plant Species/Habitat: Localized impacts caused by motorized vehicle access will have a minor negative impact. Existing management adequately protects these species throughout the WSA.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments discussed natural values that supported inclusion of this area in the wilderness study process.
2. Study Phase: Of the 22 letters received on this WSA, 18 favored wilderness designation. Vegetative, geologic, scenic, wildlife and archaeologic values were mentioned. A large number of respondents stressed the importance of the Joshua tree forest, first, as an outstanding growth of *Yucca brevifolia* var. *jaegeriana* and second, for its screening effect and provision of a feeling of solitude. Other flora often mentioned were the many species of cholla cactus

and the unique grasslands. Birds were common in this habitat, particularly red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, prairie falcons, red-shafted flicker and the great horned owl.

The unique geology of the area was also emphasized--the lava flows, Cima Dome, and alluvial valleys. All of these features and the special vegetation produced outstanding scenery and opportunities for primitive recreation such as camping, hiking, backpacking, photography, bird watching and nature study.

Several letters suggested combining the unnumbered roadless areas, although they were less than 5,000 acres, into a large Cima Dome wilderness area. The roads between areas were described as infrequently used and unnoticeable (these boundary roads are utilized by ranchers to maintain range improvements and by recreationists utilizing two-wheel drive or OHVs for access into the more frequently visited areas of Cima Dome). The four letters opposing wilderness designation dealt mainly with grazing and minerals. Silver, lead and zinc were specific minerals listed along with geothermal potential. Sights and sounds felt to detract from wilderness potential were transmission lines, roads, range facilities, and nearby towns. One letter complained about the total area being less than 5,000 acres.

No comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were no comments specific to this WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. This was one of the many WSAs opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-highway vehicle organizations. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting multiple use classification of moderate use for this area. This was in agreement with the recommendation of the Use Alternative. Conservation groups wanted protection for this area; some accepted the recommendation of the Balanced and Protection Alternatives of limited use while others wanted wilderness designation.
4. Proposed Plan: Conservation organizations asked specifically for stronger management for the Cima Dome area than that offered by the Plan's proposed National Natural Landmark designation, in order to control grazing conflicts. Organizations such as NOC maintained the same position as for the Draft Plan Alternatives.

No comments were received from local governments.

Cima Dome

CDCA 238B

CIMA DOME WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-238B)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

22,679 acres

The Cima Dome WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 20,989 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 758 acres of land belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totaling approximately 932 acres. No split-estate lands exist within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The study area is located 18 miles south of Interstate Highway 15. Beginning at Rainbow Wells in the southwestern corner of the WSA, the boundary follows the eastern edge of a maintained telephone line road north for five and one-half miles. The boundary turns northeast and then southeast, following a graded ranch road until it intersects with the transmission line road. At this point, the southwestern boundary follows an imaginary line 400 feet north of the northern edge of the utility transmission line right-of-way for seven miles then turns northwest for three-fourths of a mile following a graded road until it intersects with Rainbow Wells.

The study area is within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated by the Secretary of the Interior in conjunction with approval of the California Desert Plan in 1980. The WSA is situated on the southwest slope of Cima Dome, an area which has attracted the attention of arid region geologists for many years. The Dome's slope gently rises from the bajada to the west where it attains a height of 5,701 feet. Shaped like an inverted gold pan, the dome is an almost perfect, symmetrically rounded landform rising 1500 feet above the surrounding desert. This gently sloping landform is best seen from a distance as it covers some 75 square miles and comprises a landmark visible throughout much of the EMNSA. Additionally, the entire study area is included in the larger Cima Dome Joshua tree forest Unusual Plant Assemblage (UPA) identified in the final CDCA Plan. The UPA supports one of the largest and most uniform dense stands of Joshua trees in the southwest. Overall, portions of Cima Dome and the Joshua tree forests are included in five WSAs. To protect the geologic and vegetative resources located on Cima Dome, approximately 18,390 acres involving five WSA's are included in the Cima Dome Outstanding Natural Area and were withdrawn from agricultural entry, public sales and mineral entry in 1972. Of the 18,390 acres, approximately 5700 acres or 30% of the withdrawn lands are included within this WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE —

0 acres recommended for
wilderness
20,989 BLM acres recommended for
nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The no-wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the area's value as wilderness is overshadowed by its potential for motorized recreation and mining; (2) wilderness designation has the potential to conflict with future energy and transmission needs; and (3) the area's special features can be protected without wilderness designation, under existing management guidelines.

Current recreation use within the Cima Dome WSA is almost exclusively motorized, and would therefore be displaced by wilderness designation. Use is estimated at 1500 visitor-use days annually and the predominant activities involve studies associated with the geology and vegetation of Cima Dome along with hiking and hunting. There are approximately 18 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

Portions of the WSA have a moderate potential for gold, copper and lead. Other areas within the study area have a moderate potential for oil and gas. Of the approximately 70% of the study area not currently withdrawn from mineral entry, wilderness designation would conflict with full development of these potential resources. Conversely, under wilderness designation valid existing mining claims could be developed and would conflict with maintenance of wilderness values.

The features of major significance in this WSA are the geologic landform of Cima Dome and the Joshua tree woodland Unusual Plant Assemblage. Both the dome and the forest are within the boundaries of the Cima Dome Habitat Management Area, for which a habitat management plan (HMP) has been completed. The HMP outlines protective measures for these sensitive resources in a framework of multiple use management. Additionally, that portion of the dome and the Joshua tree forest included in the Outstanding Natural Area are currently under an existing withdrawal which encompasses 30% of the overall Cima Dome WSA and extends outside of the study area boundary to include an additional 12,700 acres under formal withdrawal. The EMNSA Plan proposes a 320-acre expansion of the existing withdrawal to include Wildcat Butte, a site with excellent recreation potential for hiking and interpretation located in the eastern portion of the WSA.

Additional protective measures for wilderness values and other resource values are being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the EMNSA Plan. These actions include restrictions on the use of firearms, closure of additional routes of travel and enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas. The resource values in the WSA would be managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's limited use guidelines coupled with the current mineral withdrawal, acquisition of non-Federal lands, and restrictions outlined in existing management plans serve to minimize potential impacts to resources within the WSA.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	20,989
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		758
Private		932
Total		<u>22,679</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	20,989
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>20,989</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Criss-crossing the dome are seven miles of fenceline and a five-mile network of old ways and routes which, for the most part, can be traced back to the building of the Southern California Edison utility transmission line from Hoover Dam in Nevada to the Los Angeles basin in the 1930's. These routes are slowly reverting back to a more natural condition. Overall, the majority of the WSA is affected primarily by natural forces and retains its undeveloped primeval character.
2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude are available throughout the WSA. The thickness of the Joshua tree woodlands along with the topographical variation provides opportunities for the seeker of seclusion.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities for hiking, backpacking and nature study are available although limited by the network of routes and fencelines which prevents unconfined movement throughout the entire study area.
4. Special Features: Portions of the larger Cima Dome Outstanding Natural Area, which includes the dome and the Joshua tree forests, occurs within this WSA. As a result of these special features, roughly 30% of the study area is currently withdrawn from mineral entry. The withdrawal includes approximately 5700 acres encompassing nine sections of land situated on the southwest slope of Cima Dome.

In the better quality Joshua tree habitat, mule deer may be encountered. Dove, quail and chukar as well as raptors such as red-tailed hawks, American kestrels, Cooper's hawks, prairie falcons, and great horned owls may also be encountered. Swainson's hawks have been observed within several miles of the WSA. No BLM sensitive or Federal- or State-listed rare, threatened or endangered wildlife species are known to occur in the study area.

Cima Dome, and specifically the town of Cima, founded in 1907, was a known travel nexus in historic times. Mining and homesteading were brought together by the Union Pacific Railroad. Water wells, range improvements, representational of 19th century technology, mines, assorted trails, and miscellaneous artifacts are some of the known remnants of this period of California's desert history.

The general proximity around a natural spring along the northern border of this WSA is considered sensitive in terms of cultural resources. This is due to the prevalent occurrence of archaeological sites near desert water sources and a known aboriginal trade route between Little Cowhole Mountain to the west and Deer Spring passes through the study area.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA falls contains 20,989 acres of the American Desert/Creosote bush (Larrea) ecosystem. Although Cima Dome is a unique geologic feature, this ecosystem is widespread throughout the CDCA and is represented within the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,246,920
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,633,116

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of six major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
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San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of nine BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation; eight are within the CDCA and one is in Nevada's Las Vegas District. The closest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 170 miles south of the Cima Dome WSA.

C. Manageability

The Cima Dome WSA is manageable as wilderness. Readily definable boundaries and the lack of private inholdings enhance management possibilities of the area.

Resource uses associated with potential mineral development pose conflicts to management of the area as wilderness. Because many of the area's 121 mining claims are within the zone predicted to have moderate potential for gold, copper, and lead, it is likely that at least a portion of the claims would withstand a validity examination. Unless the United States can acquire the valid mineral rights, those claims which can be developed which will severely degrade wilderness values.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Cima Dome WSA is in the BLM Cima Dome Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 indicated that the WSA has a potential for

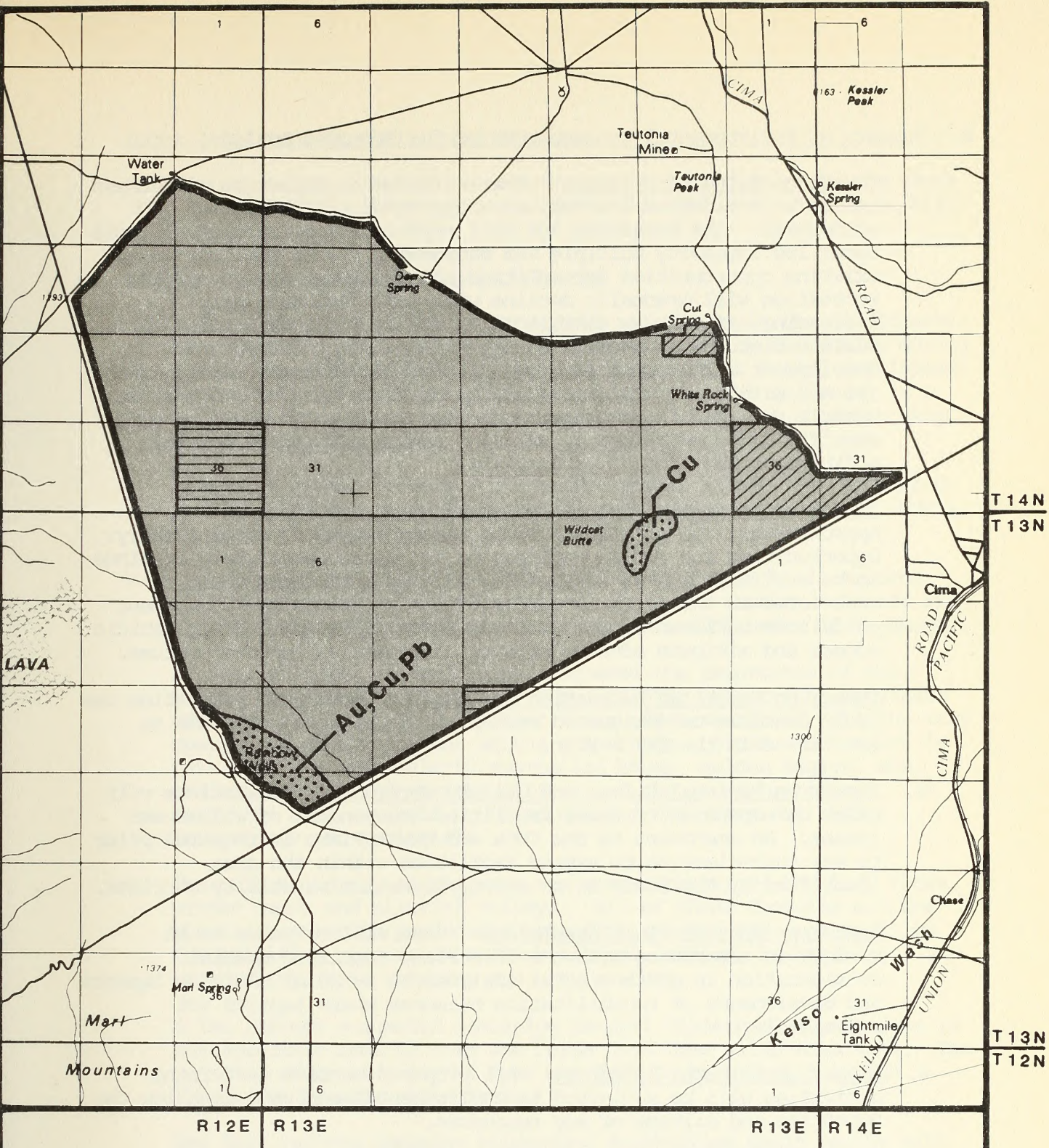
geothermal energy, uranium and thorium. The BLM records dated December 12, 1979 indicate that there were at least two recorded unpatented mining claims in the southwestern part of the WSA.

According to the 1980 GRA files, no mines were known to occur in the WSA. Uranium and thorium anomalies were found to occur over intermediate plutonic rocks, and were thought to be caused by the occurrence of minor thorium mineralization. An occurrence potential for geothermal energy is stated in the GRA assessment (1980) based on an unpublished U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) report Calzia et al (1979). An administrative report to the BLM by the USGS titled Leasable Mineral Resources of the California Desert Conservation Area identified this WSA to be within a Potential Geothermal Resource Area (PGRA). However, the author of the G-E-M analysis (1980) did not expect geothermal resources to occur in this WSA, nor has there been any interest in geothermal exploration since 1980.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No USGS or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral surveys were conducted in the WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. A resource status map and report based on work by the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) were prepared by the BLM that considered the mineral occurrence potential of this WSA. The results of this data compilation were published in May, 1986, as a BLM report (Evans, J.R., 1986, Mineral Impact Study of a 2,000 Square Mile Area of the East Mojave Desert, San Bernardino County, CA). In his report, Evans classified a small area in the southwest corner of the WSA as having a moderate potential for occurrence of gold, copper and lead based on its proximity to the Rainbow Wells gold mine that is within one-quarter mile, but outside the WSA boundary. The Rainbow Wells Mine is comprised of a cluster of shallow shafts and adits in a porphyritic type quartz monzonite. Copper and lead mineralization occurs in northwest-trending quartz veins. The mine is reported (GRA reports 1980) to have produced 134 tons of gold ore prior to 1951. Evans also classified an area in the southeastern part of the WSA with a moderate occurrence potential for copper (production unknown, but probably part of the Cima or Death Valley mining district). Both of these areas with a moderate occurrence potential for metallic minerals under the BLM mineral classification scheme are shown on the accompanying Mineral Resource potential map. Unpatented mining claims located within the WSA are summarized in the following table taken from BLM records dated January, 1988.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Placer	N/A	121	121	N/A	4,840	4,840
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	121	121	N/A	4,840	4,840



**Cima Dome
Mineral Resource Potential**

NONE	Recommended for Wilderness
	Recommended for Non Wilderness
	Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
	Split Estate
	State
	Private

Explanation

	High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
	Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
M	Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
H	High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

0 1 2 3
MILES

Commodity Symbols

Au Gold
Cu Copper
Pb Lead

**MAP-2
CDCA-238B**

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: There will be no impact to wilderness values on the 30% of the WSA currently under formal mineral withdrawal. The remaining 70% will experience no immediate impacts under low intensity multiple use management. Over the long-term, existing opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation will gradually decline with projected gradually increasing off-highway vehicle (OHV) use of the area. Noise and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development will result in a gradual decline in these values in the 70% not withdrawn. This adverse impact is considered minor since vehicle use and mineral exploration and development would be site-specific and constrained by existing management guidelines in addition to the mineral withdrawals.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Approximately 30% of the WSA would remain closed to mineral entry. Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available in 70% of the WSA. Mining activities would be restricted in this area as a result of regulations and management guidelines outlined in the CDCA and EMNSA Plans which limit vehicle access and mitigate adverse effects on sensitive resource values.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the EMNSA Plan.
4. Impact on Regional Energy and Utility Corridors: Constraints will exist on expansion of these facilities independent of wilderness issues. An amendment to the CDCA and EMNSA Plans is required prior to any authorization to expand facilities within the area identified by the State as an energy/transmission utility corridor.
5. Impact on Unusual Plant Assemblage: UPAs will continue to be managed in accordance with the CDCA Plan, requiring special consideration in environmental analyses to avoid or minimize impacts and development of rehabilitation measures where impacts are unavoidable.
6. Impact on Cultural Resources: All proposed surface disturbing activities will be subjected to environmental analysis to allow the detection and salvage of any resources.
7. Impact on Cima Dome Outstanding Natural Area: Impacts are considered to be minor as existing mineral withdrawals and other guidelines established in the EMNSA and CDCA Plans provide sufficient protection to retain natural values.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments discussed natural values that supported inclusion of this area in the wilderness study phase. Field checks verified this opinion.
2. Study Phase: Of the 22 letters received on this WSA, 18 favored wilderness designation. Vegetative, geologic, scenic, wildlife and archaeologic values were mentioned in decreasing order of frequency.

A large majority of respondents stressed the importance of the joshua tree forest, first, for its screening ability and provision of a feeling of solitude. Other flora often mentioned were the many species of cholla and the unique grasslands. Birds were common in this habitat, particularly red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, the prairie falcon, red-shafted flicker and the great horned owl. In fact, the area was said to be an outdoor classroom for both naturalists and geologists.

The unique geology of the area was also emphasized--the lava flows, cinder cones and alluvial valleys. All of these features and the special vegetation produced outstanding scenery and opportunities for primitive recreation such as hiking, camping, backpacking, photography, bird watching and nature study.

A few letters suggested combining several wilderness study areas in the immediate area to form one large Cima Dome wilderness area. The presence of grazing in the area was felt to be compatible with wilderness by many respondents.

The four letters opposing wilderness designation dealt mainly with grazing and mineral concerns. Silver, lead and zinc were specific minerals listed along with geothermal potential. Sights and sounds felt to detract from the area's wilderness potential were: transmission lines, roads, range facilities and nearby towns. One letter urged continued use of the Interim Critical Management Plan with use of existing vehicle routes.

No comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were few comments specific to WSA 238B in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. This WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle organizations. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting a multiple use classification of moderate use for this area. This was in agreement with the recommendation of the Use alternative. Conservation oriented individuals and organizations approved the Protection Alternative which recommended wilderness designation for this area.
4. Proposed Plan: Conservation organizations asked specifically for stronger management for the Cima Dome area than that afforded by the Proposed Plan's National Natural Landmark Designation, in order to control grazing conflicts. Organizations such as NOC maintained the same position as for the Draft Plan Alternatives.

No comments were received from local government.

Cinder Cones

CDCA 239

CINDER CONES WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-239)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 56,102 acres

The Cinder Cones WSA is located in eastern San Bernardino County, in the east-central portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest cities are Barstow, California, 70 miles southeast; Las Vegas, Nevada, 110 miles northeast; and Needles, California, 80 miles southeast. The WSA contains 53,543 acres of public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and 2,559 acres of State land. (see Map 1 and Table 1). Two-wheel drive access to the northern, western, and eastern boundaries is provided by paved or graded dirt roads that connect the area with Interstate 15, four miles north of the WSA, and Interstate 40, 50 miles south of the WSA. Off-highway vehicles can access the southern WSA boundary through Willow Wash and Indian Spring.

Beginning at the southwest corner, the western WSA boundary follows Kelbaker Road northwest for almost two miles. The boundary leaves Kelbaker Road at a point where the latter makes a sharp bend to the west and follows a graded dirt road northwest for three and one-half miles to its intersection with another dirt road. The northwestern boundary follows this latter road past Henry Spring, cherrystems approximately one mile of the route to Granite Spring, then continues to follow the road over Halloran Summit to the northeast corner of the WSA. At this point, the northeastern boundary follows Valley View Ranch Road about one and one-half miles to the Aiken Cinder Mine access road, which forms the next seven miles of the WSA's eastern boundary. The eastern boundary then leaves the mine access road, running cross-country to skirt areas of cinder mining activity. At the southeast corner, the boundary meets another mining access road. This road forms the southern boundary of the WSA until it intersects Kelbaker Road at the southwestern corner of the WSA near Seventeenmile Point.

The Cinder Cones WSA includes a diverse combination of landforms ranging from flat valleys and sloping bajadas to a volcanic field containing 15 extinct volcanic cones rising 300 to 600 feet above the surrounding terrain. As might be expected from such recent volcanic activity, vegetation is sparse upon the lava fields, resulting in a very bleak, stark, almost lunar landscape. Beyond the edge of the lava flow, the flora and fauna typify the Mojave Desert. Joshua trees dominate much of the area, along with several varieties of cacti, including cholla, barrel cactus, and strawberry hedgehog cactus.

Several other designations overlie the WSA or portions of it. The study area is entirely within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated by the Secretary of the Interior in conjunction with approval of the California Desert Plan in 1980. A small segment at the southeastern corner of the WSA is within the Cinder Cones Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) designated by BLM, which has been withdrawn from mineral entry. A larger portion of the WSA's southeast corner is within the Cinder Cones National Natural Landmark (NNL) designated by the National Park Service. Both the NNL and the ONA extend beyond the WSA to the south and east.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 43,974 acres recommended for
wilderness
11,842 BLM acres recommended for
nonwilderness

Seventy-eight percent partial suitable wilderness is the recommendation for the Cinder Cones WSA. The 11,842 acres in this WSA recommended nonsuitable are released for uses other than wilderness. In addition to the public land recommended for wilderness, BLM recommends that 2,273 acres of State land be acquired through exchange or purchase and designated as wilderness. With acquisition of these inholdings, a total of 43,974 acres are recommended for wilderness. Appendix 1 lists all inholdings and provides additional information on their acquisition. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The partial wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the recommended suitable area has very high wilderness values which outweigh other resource uses; (2) the area contains outstanding examples of comparatively recent volcanic activity, which would add to the diversity of features protected within the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS); and (3) the lands recommended for nonwilderness contain lower quality wilderness values.

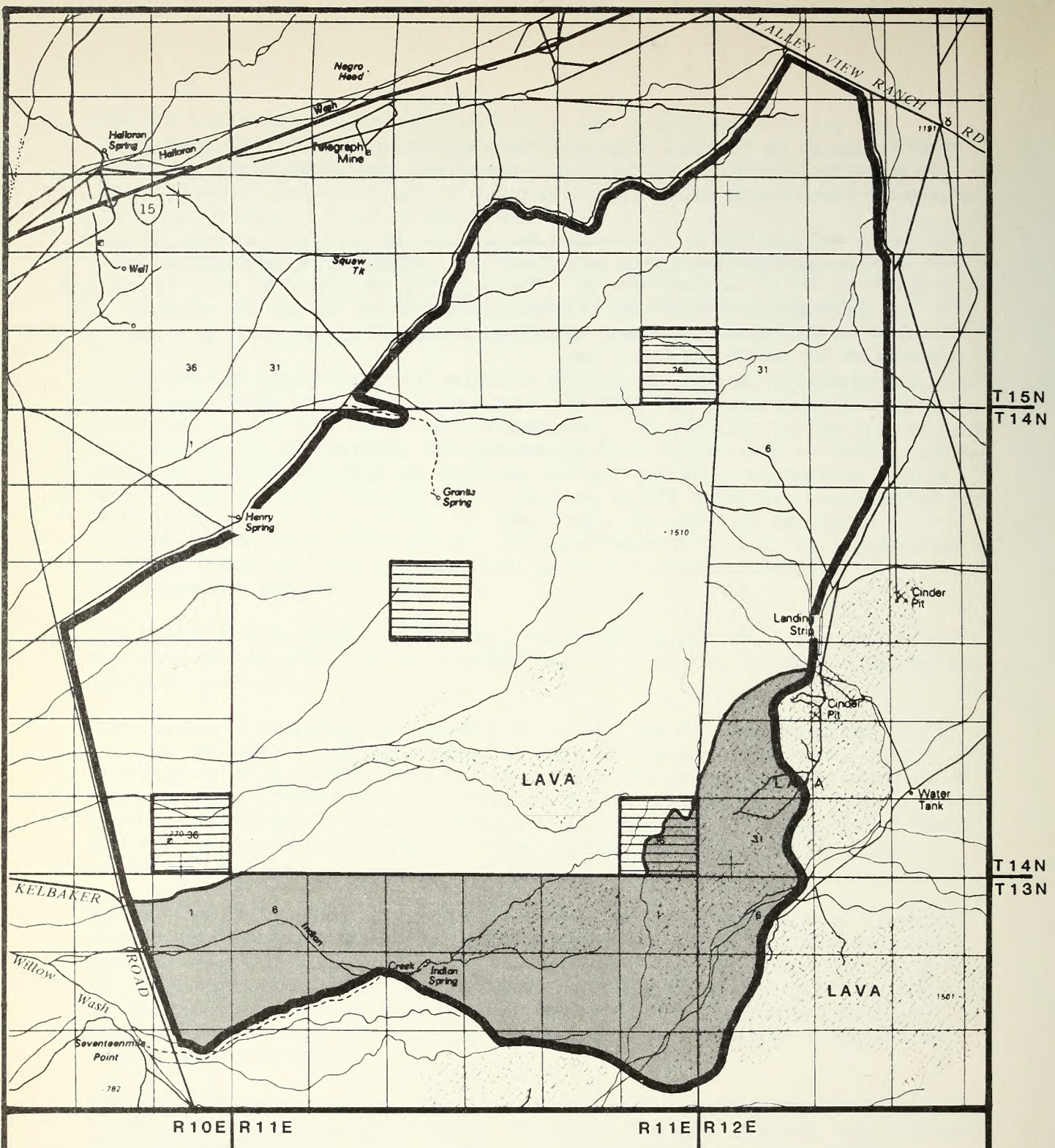
Within the recommended wilderness, the earth and its community of life are indeed untrammelled by man, and man himself is only a visitor who does not remain. Opportunities for hiking, photography, and geological and cultural research are limited only by the interests of desert recreationists. Because wilderness values are so significant, the suitability recommendation will preclude any further vehicular use of approximately 30 miles of primitive access routes of travel.

The WSA contains extensive lava flows dotted by 15 extinct cinder cones. An equal number of cinder cones exist outside of the WSA boundary, and together this concentration of cones, along with the abundance of other volcanic materials, has been cited as the largest and best example of volcanic activity in the Mojave Desert. Wilderness designation will permanently preserve the most untouched portion of this landscape in its natural state.




The WSA contains 175 unpatented mining claims 77 of which are located in that portion recommended suitable for wilderness designation. However, only areas of low locateable mineral potential have been identified within the area. Therefore, designation as wilderness is not considered to be a significant

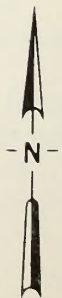
adverse impact on locateable mineral development values. It is felt that wilderness values outweigh the area's potential for cinder materials because a source exists just outside the WSA.

The lands recommended for nonwilderness within the southern portion of the WSA contain surface disturbances and vehicle routes which are related to prospecting and mining activities. The majority of this area will be managed for low intensity multiple use to provide controlled access for mineral exploration and development and motorized recreation, yet still provide protection for sensitive resources.



-  RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
-  RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS
-  LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

-  SPLIT ESTATE
-  STATE
-  PRIVATE



**Cinder Cone
Proposal
MAP-1**

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-239
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	53,543
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		2,559
Private		0
Total		<u>56,102</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	41,701
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>41,701</u>
Inholdings ¹		
State		2,273
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	11,842
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>11,842</u>

¹ Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The majority of this WSA is essentially untrammelled by man. Within the recommended wilderness, approximately one and one-half miles of primitive ways lead to Granite Spring, with another five miles of primitive ways in the Cow Cove area.

The portion of the WSA recommended for nonwilderness contains additional primitive ways, and numerous scattered mineral prospects.

2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude abound. Varied topography and vegetation screen the WSA from the active cinder mining operations to the east.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities are provided throughout the valleys and canyon washes surrounding the cinder cones and the sheer-faced lava flows. Although the WSA currently receives low recreational visitation, educational groups frequent the WSA to study the vegetational recovery rate after volcanic activity, and the geological and cultural resources of the WSA.
4. Special Features: The WSA contains extensive black lava flows dotted by 15 extinct cinder cones. An equal number of cinder cones exist outside of the WSA boundary, and together this concentration of cones, along with the abundance of other volcanic materials, has been cited as the largest and best example of volcanic activity in the Mojave Desert. Portions of the WSA lie within the Cinder Cones Outstanding Natural Area and the Cinder Cones National Natural Landmark. Types of cones within the WSA include single cones of cinder and ash, parasitic and breached cones, and collapsed lava tubes. The surrounding lava flows cover 15 contiguous square miles. Two stages of volcanism are represented, the younger of which is possibly no more than 1,000 years old.

In addition to its unusual geological features, the WSA contains a wealth of prehistoric cultural resources. Prehistoric sites within the WSA include village sites, rock shelters, trails or foot paths, and outstanding examples of rock art.

No Native American values are documented within the area. A Chemehuevi-Serrano ethnographic boundary runs through the southern part of the WSA, which may indicate this area was used by both groups. It is indicated that some temporary camps occupied by the Chemehuevi exist in and around Granite and Indian Springs.

The small riparian area at Indian Spring has been designated an unusual plant assemblage (UPA).

An abundance of wild and free roaming burros inhabit the WSA, which is within the Lava Beds Herd Management Area. Periodic roundups are required to maintain the population within the carrying capacity determined by the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The Cinder Cones WSA contains 53,543 acres of the American Desert/Creosote bush (Larrea) ecosystem. While this is a well-represented ecosystem, the Cinder Cones are unique. The addition of the suitable portion of this WSA to the NWPS adds an unusual geological feature to the system, one which is not previously represented.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,214,366
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,600,562

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of six major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of wilderness areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of these population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The closest designated wilderness is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 90 air miles south. Ten BLM study areas recommended for wilderness designation are within 50 air miles of the Cinder Cones WSA, nine in the California Desert District and one in Nevada's Las Vegas District.

C. Manageability

The entire Cinder Cones WSA is manageable as wilderness. Topography will aid the exclusion of motor vehicles along the southeastern portion of the WSA. However, a motor vehicle closure of the expansive bajadas on the western, northern, and eastern edges of the WSA would be difficult to enforce, as ways currently open to vehicles penetrate the boundaries, and no significant topographic features present a natural barrier to vehicles.

The portion of the WSA recommended for wilderness does not have a readily identifiable south boundary. This boundary follows section lines rather than any physical feature, and will require extensive posting to be discernible to the public.

The 2,280 acres of State of California lands proposed for acquisition and wilderness designation are in an undeveloped, pristine condition, and contain significant wilderness resources and wildlife habitat. Their acquisition would enhance protection of these resources and improve the overall manageability of the wilderness area.

The WSA contains portions of one "grandfathered" grazing allotment of approximately 500 animal unit months (AUMs). Grazing use would be permitted to continue under wilderness management, and is not expected to pose any manageability conflicts.

A portion of the Lava Beds (Burro) Herd Management Area is within the WSA. Wilderness designation would have a small impact on wild horse and burro management in the area. Wilderness designation would place limitations on the type of equipment available for population control measures. Periodic roundups will be required to maintain the wild burro population within the carrying capacity determined by the CDCA Plan.

The WSA contains 175 mining claims. Even though the area has low identified mineral potential, development of any valid claims would reduce wilderness values and create management problems.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Cinder Cones WSA is in the BLM Cima Dome Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). Mineral resource data for the WSA had not been fully analyzed or interpreted at the time of the preliminary recommendations. However, the CDCA Plan EIS cited an unqualified potential for geothermal energy, cinders, metals, uranium, and thorium within the WSA. As of June, 1979, there were four mining claims in the WSA recorded with the BLM.
2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) conducted mineral surveys of the WSA in 1983 and 1985. The results of these studies were published in 1987 in USGS Bulletin 1712-B. The bulletin estimated 30 million tons of cinders in the study area but did not classify their potential. The bulletin also delineated two areas where the subsurface contacts between Cretaceous granite and older rocks indicated a geologic environment similar to what had been successfully mined outside the WSA for gold, silver, lead, and zinc. USGS classified the northwestern and southwestern portions of the WSA as having a low potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, lead, and zinc based on this information.

Because the study area is known to contain similar cinder deposits to those currently being mined by the Aiken Cinder Mines Company immediately outside the WSA boundary, the southeastern part of the WSA is classified as having a high potential for the occurrence of cinders under the BLM classification system.

Unpatented placer mining claims are concentrated in the southern, northeastern and eastern portions of the WSA. Unpatented lode mining claims are concentrated in the southern portion of the WSA. The following table summarizes active claims within the WSA as of January 1988.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

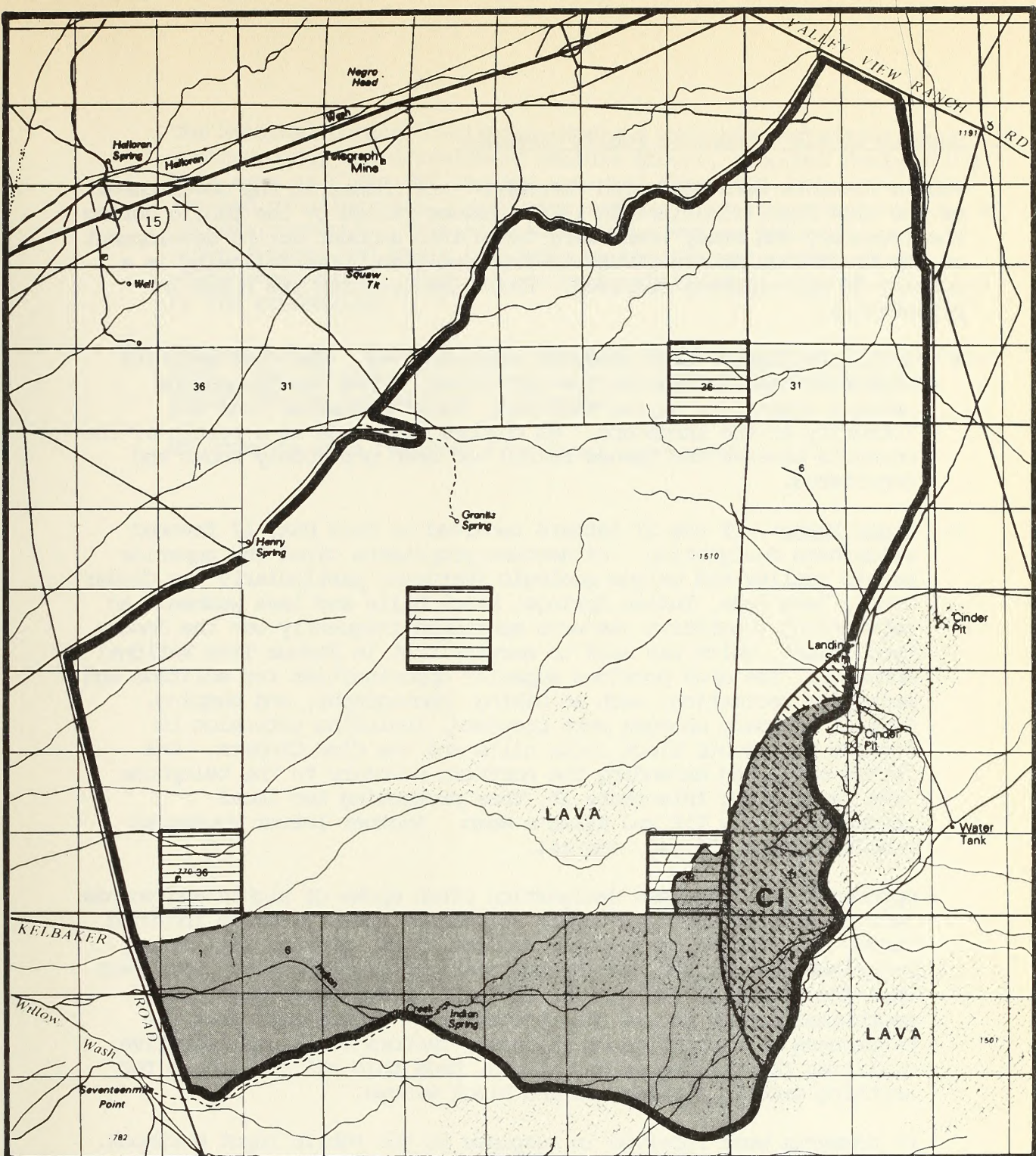
TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	1	23	24	20	460	480
Placer	76	75	151	3,040	3,000	6,040
Mill Site	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	77	98	175	3,060	3,460	6,520

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values will be maintained on the 81% of the WSA to be designated wilderness. Values will gradually decline on the remainder of the WSA, as a result of mineral exploration and development, and motorized recreation. Development of any of the 77 mining claims proven valid would adversely impact wilderness values in the vicinity of operation.
2. Impact on Cultural Resources: Within the recommended wilderness, elimination of vehicular access will reduce the frequency of vandalism at petroglyphs and other archeological sites. However, restrictions will be placed on resource stabilization and scientific excavation. Within the area recommended for no wilderness, vehicle access will be curtailed in sensitive areas to reduce vandalism and potential impacts to sensitive areas. There will be no impact on scientific investigations. All proposed surface disturbing activities will be subjected to environmental analysis to allow the detection and salvage of resources.
3. Impact on Indian Spring Unusual Plant Assemblage: The UPA will remain outside the suitable area. It will continue to be managed in accordance with the CDCA Plan, requiring special consideration in environmental analyses to avoid or minimize impacts, and development of rehabilitation measures where impacts are unavoidable.
4. Impact on Mineral Exploration and Development: Eighty-one percent of the WSA will be withdrawn from mineral entry including sale of cinders. Development of the 77 existing claims will be subject to proof of a valid discovery. Nineteen percent of the WSA, containing 98 claims, will be unaffected by the proposed action. Portions of this area are proposed for withdrawal from mineral entry.
5. Impact on Motorized Recreation: The 81% of the WSA to be designated wilderness contains about five miles of motor vehicle routes. Closure of these routes will result in the displacement of less than 1,000 visitor-use days of motorized recreation annually.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

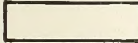

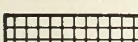

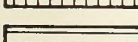
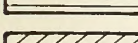
No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.



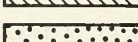


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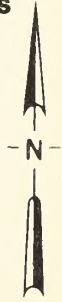
-  Recommended for Wilderness
-  Recommended for Non Wilderness
-  Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
-  Split Estate
-  State
-  Private

Explanation

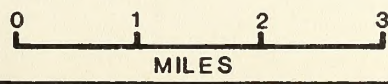
-  High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
-  Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
-  Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
-  High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

CI Cinders



**Cinder Cone
Mineral Resource Potential**



**MAP-2
CDCA-239**

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Known inaccuracies are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Many comments were received. The vast majority supported the findings in the narrative. A few challenged the natural condition, saying that many "ways" detracted from the integrity of the landscape. No changes were made as a result of the comments because the issues raised had been previously known and considered.
2. Study Phase: Of the 27 letters received on this WSA, 17 favored wilderness designation. Wilderness proponents cited the superior scenic quality and unique geologic features, particularly the Cinder Cones, lava beds, Indian Springs, black hills and lava washes. An outstanding vegetative resource mentioned frequently was the Joshua Tree forest, which was said to surpass that in Joshua Tree National Monument. The area provides superior opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, such as hiking, photography, and camping. Several boundary changes were proposed, including extension to include the scenic black rocks hills and the Cima Cinders. One letter suggested extending the northern boundary to the telephone line paralleling Interstate 15, thus protecting two local landmarks, Squaw Tit and Aiken's Wash. Another letter suggested combining WSAs 239,240, and 244.

Opponents of wilderness designation often spoke of sights and sounds felt to detract from the area's wilderness quality; these included roads, a telephone cable road, repeater huts, grazing facilities, motorized vehicle use, and mining scars on cinder cones. Some felt that the potential for mineral exploration and development and geothermal energy should take precedence. Others felt that the barrenness and isolation of the area, factors which were positive qualities for wilderness proponents, made this WSA unsuitable for anything except rattlesnakes and black widows.

No comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: The following range of public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Desert Plan. Some wanted the remainder of the WSA also recommended as suitable for wilderness in the Protection Alternative, while another insisted that adjacent Wilderness Study Areas be combined with this study area as part of the Protection Alternative. In addition, more nonmountainous acreage should be recommended as suitable for wilderness under the Balance Alternative.

The National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups, proposed designating this area as Class "M" (medium use) and Class "I" (intensive use) instead of wilderness. Many club members sent in printed coupons or letters supporting this position. Conservation oriented organizations and their followers wanted the entire WSA given wilderness status. Some respondents continued to request expansion of the boundaries.

4. Proposed Plan: General input was very similar to that for the Draft Plan. The citizens for Mojave National Park requested that the entire WSA be included as wilderness.

No comments were received from local government.

APPENDIX 1
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION
CINDER CONES WSA (CDCA-239)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				TOTAL ACREAGE	NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	
	TWNSHP	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN			SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)
1	14N.	10E.	36	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
2	14N.	11E.	16	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
3	14N.	11E.	36	SBM	360	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
4	15N.	11E.	36	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0

These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.

Soda Mountains

CDCA 242

SODA MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-242)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

132,165 acres

The Soda Mountains WSA is located in San Bernardino County within the north-central portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The community of Baker is less than one mile from the southeast edge of the WSA. The WSA includes 118,537 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 5,211 acres owned by the State of California and 8,417 acres of private land (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern boundary of the WSA is the gravel Silver Lake Mine Road and an imaginary line 400 feet south of three high voltage transmission lines which were in place in 1979, except where the service road extends beyond 400 feet and then the service road is the boundary. A gravel road forms the western boundary road except where the boundary deviates to avoid two active quarries. The southern boundary generally parallels Interstate 15, following topographic lines and a powerline maintenance road. The Blue Bell Mine and access road are cherrystemmed. State Route 127 forms the eastern boundary.

Portions of the WSA are located within a utility corridor designated in the CDCA Plan. Other portions of the WSA are within a future utility corridor (1990-2020) identified for the State of California. The central portion of the WSA is within an area identified in an expansion proposal for the adjacent Fort Irwin Military Reservation.

The WSA contains approximately 35% mountains, 30% alluvial fans, 10% hills, 10% playas, 5% sand covered fans, 5% dissected fans, 3% sand covered plains, 1% highly dissected fans, and 1% sand covered dissected fans. The topography of the WSA varies from several gentle sloping bajadas to the rugged Soda Mountains. This highly eroded mountain range has jagged ridges and sharp peaks that reach 3,663 feet in elevation. The associated canyons have steep rocky walls that vary in color from brown at the base to red in the center and gold near the top. Within the range are large interior valleys created by erosion. The bajadas are interlaced with washes and slope away from the mountains toward the WSA's boundaries. The West Cronese, East Cronese and Silver Dry Lakes are within the WSA. Ironically, the dry lake beds with elevations of 1,080, 1,080 and 907 feet, respectively, are not the lowest points in the WSA. The northern bajada slopes to 880 feet at the WSA's northern boundary.

Vegetation consists primarily of creosote bush scrub and salt bush-greasewood scrub. The latter community occupies lower elevations of alluvial fans, while creosote bush scrub occurs on more upland areas. Approximately 90% of the 7257 acre Cronese Lake Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is within the boundaries of the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0 acres recommended for wilderness

118,537 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Soda Mountains WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. Future activities in 99% of the WSA will be controlled by low intensity management as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. Management of one percent of the WSA will be controlled by moderate intensity management guidelines to allow for development of two sand and gravel sites for maintenance of the interstate highway system. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

Known and potential mineral values, the need to keep the land available for full development of a designated utility corridor, and opportunities for motorized recreation, when coupled with the lack of outstanding or unique natural features in the WSA, are of greater importance than the area's value as wilderness. Designation of the area as wilderness would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Other WSAs in the California Desert that are recommended suitable offer a much more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values. There are approximately 27 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

Approximately 25% of the WSA contains recognized mineral potential at the moderate or high level. Portions have high potential for gold, silver, copper, sand and gravel, and green roofing granules. Other portions have moderate potential for iron, gold, lead, zinc, copper, molybdenum, limestone, dolomite, silica, and clay. The mineralized area surrounding the Blue Bell Mine in the central portion of the WSA is in fact cherrystemmed, but does contain high potential for lead, silver, and zinc.

The WSA has a long history of mineral exploration and mineral production. An estimated 3,630 acres within the boundaries of the WSA are encumbered by 111 mining claims. These claims are spread throughout the WSA in the moderate and high potential areas. Given the history of the area and the recognized mineral potential, the likelihood for valid existing rights is considered high. Such development would seriously degrade the natural character of the entire area.

There are two sites within the WSA that contain high potential for sand and gravel. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) historically utilized one of the sites for an aggregate source in resurfacing the interstate highway system. A recent application for renewing use at both sites was denied due to the potential for impairment to wilderness values. Caltrans has appealed the BLM's denial to the Interior Board of Land Appeals because dwindling reserves outside of WSAs in the California Desert threaten their ability to maintain the highways.

Wilderness designation would prohibit full development of an energy and transmission corridor designated in the 1980 CDCA Plan and EIS. The two mile wide corridor overlaps the entire northern boundary of the WSA for approximately one mile. This corridor, along with others in the CDCA, were designated to accommodate the long-term energy and communication needs of the southwestern United States. Other portions of the WSA are within a future utility corridor (1990-2020) identified for the State of California in the Western Regional Corridor Study (1980). Depending upon the juxtaposition of WSAs ultimately designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may or may not be constraints to full development of such corridors.

Current recreation use in the WSA is low. However, the potential for increases in vehicle-dependent activities is very good. The eastern portion of the WSA has been identified for potential inclusion in a statewide off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails system.

The WSA contains 5,211 acres (12 parcels) of land owned by the State of California and 8,417 acres of private land (minimum of 22 individual parcels) spread throughout the entire WSA. Some of the State and private land contains moderate or high mineral resource potential. Development or use of any of the non-public land that requires surface disturbance would seriously degrade the natural character of the entire area. Reasonable access to this land would also be virtually impossible without new road construction. Such access would result in similar impacts.

The southern half of the WSA is in the Cronese Grazing Allotment. Improvements such as a well, windmill, and watering trough are located within the interior of the WSA.

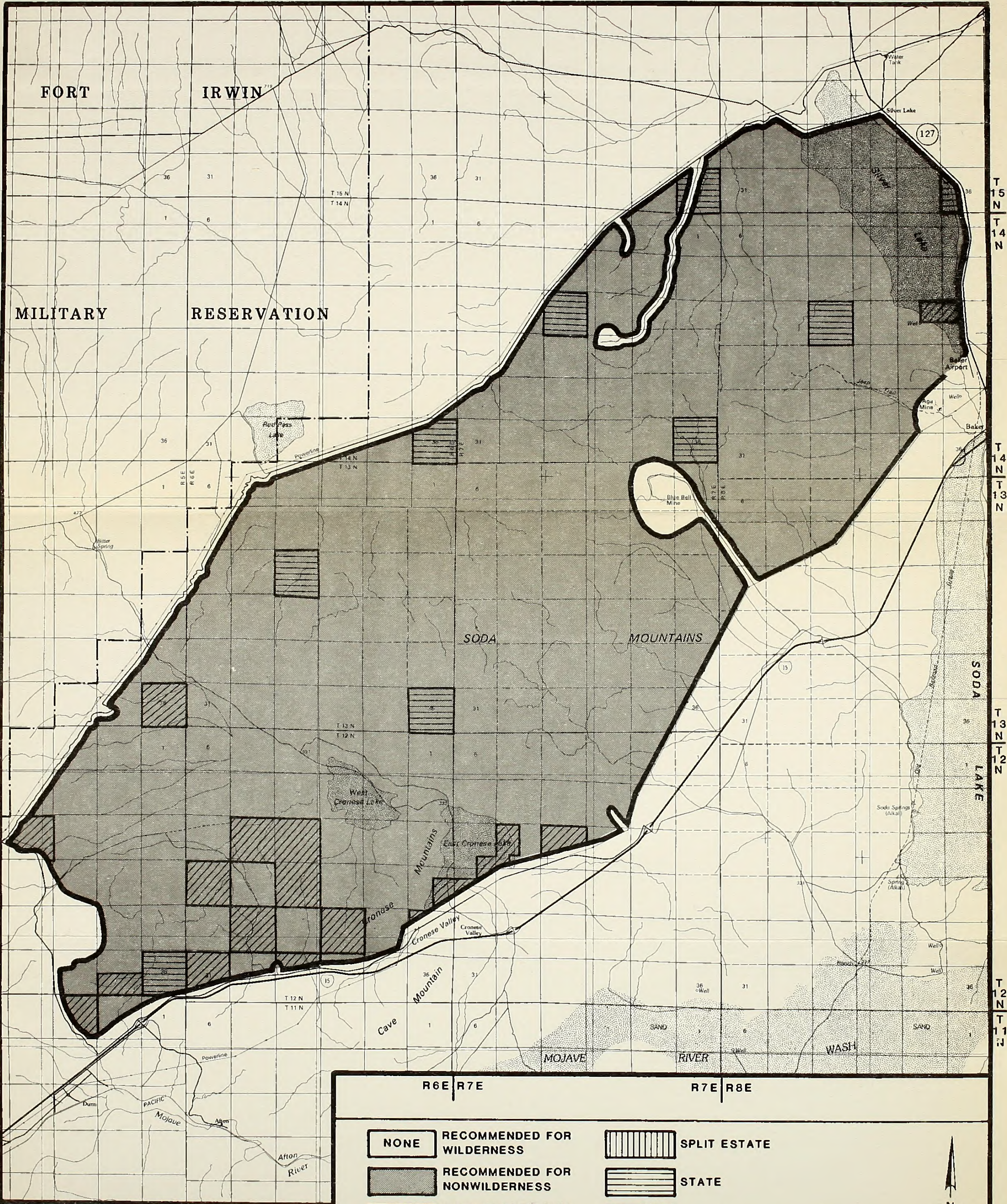
The wildlife and vegetative resources within the area are typical of the surrounding desert. The area contains no unusual plants or State or Federally listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species. Two sensitive plant species Androstephium brevifolium and Linathus arenicola are present on the southern boundary of the area. However, neither plant has any official status. The mountainous area is intermittent range for desert bighorn sheep.

The significant cultural resource and Native American concerns in the south-central portion of the WSA are within the Cronese Lakes ACEC. Actions, including route closures to assure management and protection of the values, have been implemented as a result of the ACEC management plan.

Although the area possesses wilderness values that adequately satisfy the criteria set forth in Section 2(c) of the 1984 Wilderness Act, they are not sufficiently distinctive to override the area's other uses nor warrant inclusion into the National Wilderness Preservation System. The WSA would be best managed and maintained under nonwilderness and a combination of low and moderate intensity, multiple use management guidelines as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. Sensitive resource values will not be significantly devalued, the mineral wealth of the area could be developed subject to strict environmental safeguards, and sand and gravel resources would be available for maintaining the interstate highway system.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	118,537
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		5,211
Private		8,417
Total		<u>132,165</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	118,537
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>118,537</u>



NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

Soda Mountains Proposal
MAP-1

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-242
JUNE, 1988

T 15 N
T 14 N
T 14 N
T 13 N
T 13 N
T 12 N
T 12 N
T 11 N

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Excluding mining activity, the WSA has been affected primarily by natural forces with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable. Some evidence of previous mining activity impacts individual canyons. An abandoned segment of the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad grade bisects Silver Dry Lake along the eastern edge of the WSA. Currently there are also 24 miles of existing routes of travel in the WSA that are kept open primarily by the passage of vehicles. Several other routes of travel, primarily in the Cronese Basin area, are closed to vehicular travel to protect sensitive resource values.
2. Solitude: Outstanding opportunities for solitude are available due to the area's large size and variation in land form. The large mountainous mass which comprises the Soda and Cronese Mountains, plus the large expansive alluvial fans, provides many canyons and washes where individuals are completely isolated from any internal or external evidence of the presence of man. However, in some portions of the alluvial fans where there is a lack of topographic diversity and vegetative screening, opportunities can be somewhat limited. Also, the high tension power transmission lines create a distinct linear, unnatural feature along the entire northern border.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Overall the area provides outstanding opportunities for unconfined movement and primitive types of recreation. The limiting effect of the existing routes of travel is minor. However, the cherrystemmed roads do constrain opportunities in the north central portion of the area. In addition, during the summer the lack of available water is aggravated by extreme heat and low humidity.
4. Special Features: The Cronese Basin contains significant cultural resources and Native American concerns. These values are currently managed and protected by the Cronese Lakes ACEC. Two sensitive plant species Androstephium brevifolium and Linathus arenicola are present on the south boundary of the area. However, neither plant has any official status. The mountainous area is used by desert bighorn sheep on an intermittent basis.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 63,245 acres of the American Desert/creosote bush ecosystem and 55,292 acres of the American Desert/saltbush-greasewood ecosystem. Although this WSA would add diversity in the types of ecosystems represented in the NWPS the Bureau has recommended 3 WSAs with similar ecosystems as suitable for wilderness preservation (Saline Valley WSA, Inyo Mtns. WSA, and N. Algodones Dunes WSA).

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

<u>Bailey-Kuchler</u> <u>Classification</u> <u>Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,204,862
American Desert/Saltbush- Greasewood	0	0	7	194,591
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,591,058
American Desert/Saltbush- Greasewood	0	0	7	194,591

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of eight major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 12 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is San Geronio Wilderness, administered by San Bernardino National Forest, 70 miles southwest of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Soda Mountains WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, there are several significant issues which would complicate the ability to maintain the existing wilderness values into the future.

The WSA contains a minimum of 34 parcels of private and State inholdings which comprises over ten percent of the WSA. Some of these properties contain moderate and high mineral potential. Other parcels form frontage property for the interstate highway. Development of some sort is inevitable. The County's consolidated general plan presently designates the private parcels in the WSA for "Rural Conservation." Zoning allows the parcels to be subdivided and/or utilized for residential, commercial, industrial, or agricultural purposes. In addition, there is no existing access to many of the inholdings. Without their acquisition, manageability would be substantially reduced because of the significant adverse impact any development would have on wilderness values.

Mineral rights would have to be acquired on all valid mining claims to insure manageability in large portions of the WSA. One hundred eleven mining claims encumber an estimated 3,630 acres of the high and moderate mineral potential areas in the WSA. The likelihood for valid existing rights are considered high. Unless the mineral rights were purchased, existing laws and regulations will be unable to prevent activities that would cause severe impacts to existing wilderness values.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Soda Mountains WSA (CDCA-242) is located in the BLM Avawatz Mountain Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA) and Alvord Mountain GRA. BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the Desert Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 indicated that resource data for this WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated, and interpreted. However, the EIS did indicate that the WSA had past production and possible potential for copper, lead, silver, iron, molybdenum, zinc, uranium, and industrial minerals (e.g., silica, limestone, talc) in the Soda and Cronese Mountains. There was possible potential for sodium, potassium, oil and gas, and clay in Silver and Cronese Lakes. There were 55 recorded claims in the WSA as of December 12, 1979.

The Avawatz Mountain GRA supports the statements made in the 1980 EIS. Mineral potential data classified by the GRA are shown on the accompanying Mineral Resource Potential map. The GRA classified two square miles around the Blue Bell Mine, cherrystemmed from the WSA, near the north-central portion of the WSA as having high potential for the occurrence of lead, silver, and copper based on past production of over 80 tons from 1949 to 1952. Above the Blue Bell Mine, the GRA classified about two square miles in the northern part of the WSA as having high potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, and copper, and moderate potential for the occurrence of limestone in the vicinity of Five Point Mountain. Between 1906 and 1914 there were numerous active mines in this area. Reported assays at the Three States Mine (contact metamorphic deposit) were 23 ounces per ton of silver, 0.6 ounces per ton of gold, and 3% copper. Reported assays from the Mary-June claims (volcanic breccia pipe) were as high as 20 ounces per ton of silver and 3.3% copper. An occurrence of gold was also reported.

Several square miles north and south of Five Point Mountain were assessed as having moderate potential for the occurrence of gold, lead, and zinc based on four anomalous geochemical samples and a known occurrence of gold and copper. The eastern half of this area was classified by General Electric as being favorable for mineral occurrence based on lineament density and rock types. About five square miles in the northeastern part of the WSA were assessed as having moderate potential for the occurrences of copper and molybdenum and low potential for the occurrence of iron resources. This is an area of mostly granitic and Precambrian metamorphic rocks bordering the Soda-Avawatz fault zone. This area includes occurrences of copper and iron which, at the Buzzard Mine, have been prospected at the contact of a marble breccia. The area also contains a geochemical anomaly for copper, molybdenum, and vanadium.

About 20 square miles near the central part of the WSA were classified as having moderate potential for the occurrence of copper, molybdenum, lead and zinc resources based on seven geochemical samples anomalous in these elements sampled from a fault-bordered mountain. Nearly three square miles in the northern part of the WSA were rated as having moderate potential for the occurrence of limestone, dolomite, and silica resources based on known occurrences just west of Silver Lake. Over 2,000 linear feet of quartzite are exposed there.

The Alvord Mountain GRA file indicated known occurrences of copper, iron, and roofing rock in the Cronese Mountains (southwest part of WSA) and that clay occurred in East Cronese Lake, also in the southwest part of the WSA. An occurrence of talc (sericite schist) was shown just west of the WSA. No draft report or mineral potential classification overlays were prepared for this GRA.

Both GRA files indicated that the WSA was classified by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in 1978 as prospectively valuable for sodium and oil and gas along the northeastern edge and southwestern portion.

From a Southern Pacific (SP) report (Anctil, R., et al, 1960, Geology and Mineral Occurrences of Township 12 North, Ranges 5 and 6 East..., 18 p., Map 1:24,000) it was known that green roofing granules had been produced from at least four locations in the Cronese Mountains, one of which was located in the WSA. This area has high potential for occurrence of rock suitable for roofing granules and roofing rock based on present production. The SP report stated that playa clay from East Cronese Lake had been recovered for impermeable canal and reservoir lining material. This deposit has moderate potential for the occurrence of clay suitable for pond sealant.

The 1969 appendix to the SP report also discussed an iron deposit in the Cronese Mountains, within the southwestern part of the WSA. Six cars of ore supposedly assaying 60-64% iron were shipped in 1943 from this deposit. A magnetic anomaly in the area measured about 600 feet by 350 feet. Three drill holes were estimated by a consulting engineer to indicate the occurrence of 1,446,000 long tons of 24.5% iron in the form of magnetite. In addition, the GRA file shows this area to have a high gravity anomaly. The nearest producing iron mine is five miles to the southeast at Cave Mountain. These data indicate that this area has moderate potential for the occurrence of iron resources under the BLM classification system. In 1981, a plan of operations was filed for exploration drilling for iron within the area classified as having moderate potential for iron in the southwest part of the WSA.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No USGS or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral survey was completed for this WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

In 1983, Caltrans used about 300,000 tons of sand and gravel from the southern part of the WSA (Opah Ditch Site) for repaving a 38-mile stretch of Interstate 15. In 1986, Caltrans filed an application for an additional 300,000 tons of aggregate from the same site. In 1986, Caltrans also filed an application for an alternate sand and gravel site at the southwest end of the WSA, north of the Afton turnoff. These site applications were denied for impairment reasons and mining claim conflicts. These areas are considered as having a high potential for the occurrence of sand and gravel resources based on known occurrences and current interest under the BLM classification system.

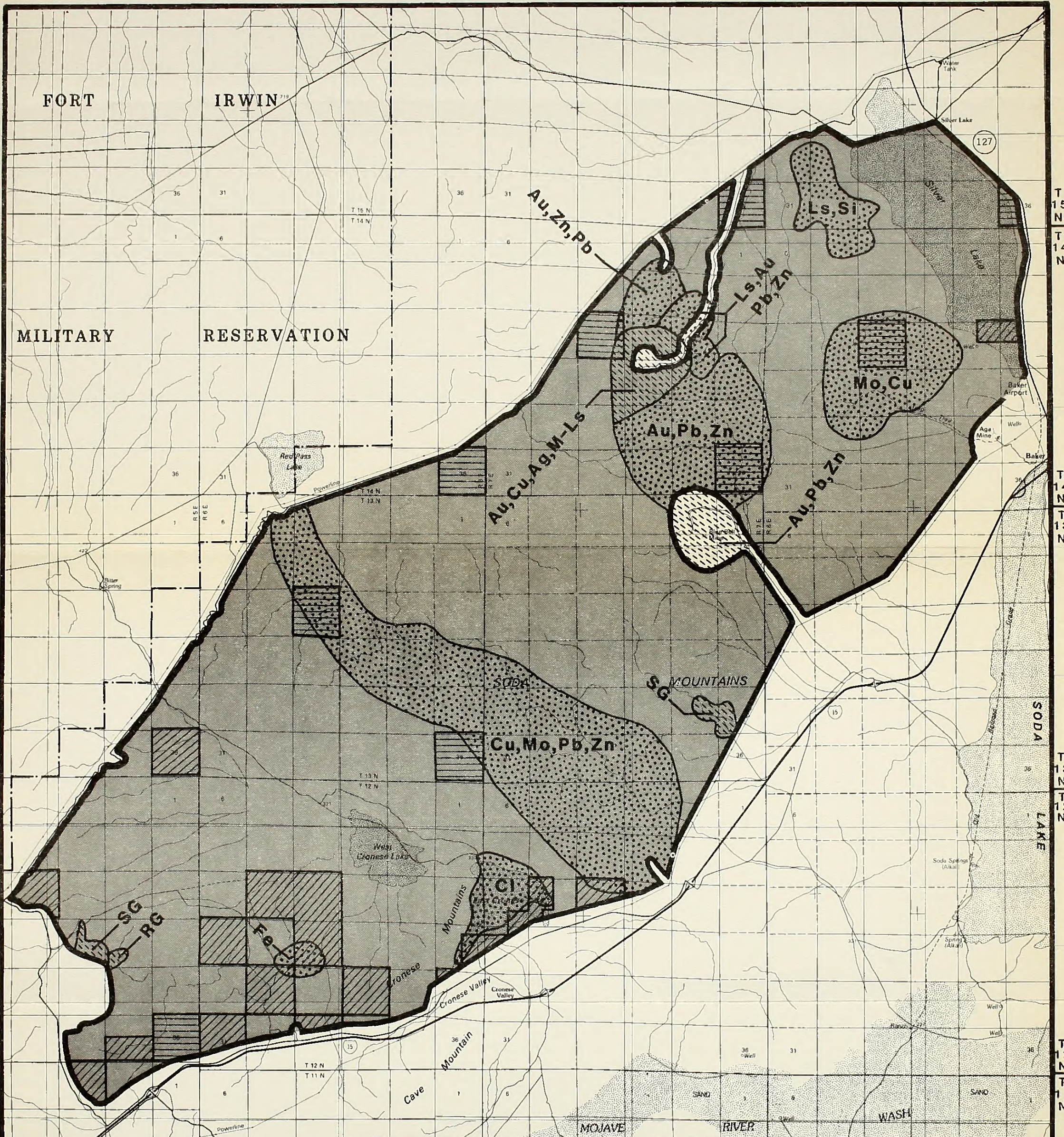
The area classified as potentially valuable for sodium and oil and gas in the WSA is considered as having a low potential for occurrence of these commodities under the BLM classification based solely on geologic inference.

In 1982, a plan of operations was filed for precious metals exploration north of Five Point Mountain within an area classified as having moderate potential for the occurrence of gold, lead, and zinc in the northern part of the WSA.

Unpatented placer mining claims are concentrated in the western, southwestern, and eastern portions of the WSA. Unpatented lode mining claims are concentrated in the eastern and north-central portions of the WSA. Mill site locations are located in the eastern portion of the WSA. Unpatented mining claims in the WSA are summarized in the following table taken from BLM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	N/A	37	37	N/A	740	740
Placer	N/A	72	72	N/A	2,880	2,880
Mill Site	N/A	2	2	N/A	10	10
Total	N/A	111	111	N/A	3,630	3,630



Soda Mountains Mineral Resource Potential		Explanation	Commodity Symbols
NONE	Recommended for Wilderness	High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals	Ag Silver
	Recommended for Non Wilderness	Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals	Au Gold
	Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness	Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area	Cl Clay
	Split Estate	High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area	Cu Copper
	State		Fe Iron
	Private		Ls Limestone & Dolomite
			Mo Molybdenum
			Pb Lead
			RG Roofing Granules
			SG Sand & Gravel
			Zn Zinc

MAP2 CDCA-242

Scale: 0 1 2 3 MILES

North Arrow: N

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Noise, surface disturbance and access requirements for mineral and energy exploration and development will negatively impact naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Identified mineral values cover approximately 25% of the WSA. Development and use of a portion of the area as part of the California Statewide OHV Trail System will also negatively impact values along the eastern edge of the area.
2. Impact on Minerals and Energy: Opportunities for exploration and development of minerals and energy will continue to be available subject to applicable laws, regulations and the low intensity, management guidelines established in the CDCA Plan. Opportunities will be available for full development of the two high sand and gravel areas by Caltrans for the maintenance of the interstate.
3. Impact on Sensitive Plant and Intermittent Desert Bighorn Sheep Habitat: The habitat within the WSA will continue to receive priority consideration over conflicting land uses according to the low intensity management prescriptions contained in the CDCA Plan.
4. Impact on Future Utility Corridor Development: Opportunities will continue to be available for full utilization and development of the utility corridor designated in the CDCA Plan. The WSA is also within a planned utility corridor (1990-2020) for the State of California as identified in the Western Regional Corridor Study (1980). Although this corridor was not identified or designated in the CDCA Plan, opportunities will continue to be available for planning and development of future corridors that are necessary to meet the long term growth needs of the Southwestern United States.
5. Impact on Cultural Resource Values and Native American Concerns: The areas of sensitivity, in addition to applicable laws and regulations, are afforded additional protection and management under the management prescriptions contained in the Cronese Lakes ACEC Management Plan.
6. Impact on Private Land Development: All private lands will continue to be available for use according to County planning guidelines.
7. Impact on Livestock Management: Opportunities will continue to be available for development of range improvements and the management of livestock to maximize proper utilization of forage produced on the public lands.
8. Impact on Vehicle-Dependent Recreation: Opportunities will continue to be available for motorized vehicle travel on designated routes of travel. Continued planning and development for a statewide OHV trail system will not be adversely impacted.

9. Impact on Adjacent Military Reservation Expansion Proposal:
Scoping and analysis of the proposed expansion of Fort Irwin will not be constrained by the nonwilderness recommendation for the WSA.
10. Impact on the Cronese Lake Area of Critical Environmental Concern:
Opportunities will continue to be available for use and protection of the ACEC under guidance found within the CDCA Plan and any subsequent management plan for the area.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: The majority of comments agreed with the findings. Several respondents suggested that the southern boundary be extended to the south. A few comments mentioned additional roads. After field checks, appropriated changes were made.
2. Study Phase: Of the 29 comments received on this WSA, seventeen opposed further wilderness study for this area. Many features were listed which various respondents felt detracted from wilderness qualification. Man-made detractions included the Union Pacific Railroad, transmission lines, pipelines, radio towers, and assorted roads and ways. Roads to the Aga Mines in the valley west of the Soda Mountains were mentioned specifically, as were the activities at the Fort Irwin Military Reservation which is adjacent to the WSA on the north. These activities include the firing of ammunition and air defense weapons, many low-altitude aircraft flights, and occasional supersonic flights. Previous use of the area for competitive OHV events was also noted. The proximity of Interstate 15 and the town of Baker were additional detractions.

Several respondents felt that further study of this area for wilderness would interfere with other potential uses of the area. An oil company wanted the area to remain open for exploration for oil, gas, and geothermal resources. Rock collecting organizations wanted access for their hobby. Miners wanted the opportunity to continue exploration for such minerals as borate, gold, copper, and silver. A company wishing to transport a coal slurry through the Boulder and Interstate 15 utility corridors requested that the study area boundaries remain flexible to accommodate this project. Off-

highway vehicle recreationists wished to continue use of this general area for competitive events and other activities. They felt that the area had no outstanding wilderness qualities and that it was needed for other types of recreation. One respondent noted that the Cronese Lakes are not natural features needing protection, since they result from diversion of the Mojave River for flood control. Another stated that the somewhat interesting geology of parts of this area could be found in many other areas of the desert.

The twelve respondents who supported further wilderness consideration for this WSA stated that the area met the 2(c) qualifications and had many outstanding features. They noted the archaeological, botanical, geological, scenic, and recreational resources, as well as the opportunities for exploration, camping photography, scientific study, and easy hiking. Specific features which were mentioned were: Silver Dry Lake, which could be included as an excellent example of playa; the huge archaeological site on the west side of west Cronese Lake (this would prevent its being totally destroyed by further vehicle events passing over it); and an old stand of very tall crucifixion thorn which needs protection. One respondent stated that the damage caused by the Barstow to Las Vegas motorcycle race through this area would eventually fade and should not be used as a reason for not designating this area. Three comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/25/79). They contained several comments pertaining to multiple use, particularly vehicle use. One respondent proposed border adjustments in order to enhance wilderness enjoyment.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: Few comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a group of mining, rock collecting and off-highway vehicle organizations. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting a multiple use classification of "moderate use" for most of the WSA and "limited use" for a small area southwest of Silver Lake. (Since this recommendation was shown on a small scale map, it was not possible to determine exactly what part of the WSA was included in the recommended limited use area). This opinion agreed, for the most part, with the Use Alternative and the No Action Alternative, both of which recommended "medium use" for the entire WSA. Conservation-oriented individuals and organizations approved the Protection Alternative which recommended wilderness designation for this WSA.

The State of California's Department of Transportation wanted adjustments in the boundary to allow for mining of sand and gravel to be used in maintenance of adjoining highways. A major oil company wanted the area designated "medium use" to allow exploration for oil, gas and geothermal resources.

4. Proposed Plan: Again, there were few specific comments on WSA 242. Conservation-oriented organizations and the National Outdoor Coalition maintained the same positions as for the Draft Plan Alternatives.

No comments were received from local governments.

Old Dad Mountain

CDCA 243

OLD DAD MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-243)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

59,679 acres

The Old Dad Mountain WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest communities are Baker, California, eight miles northwest; Twentynine Palms, California, 50 miles south; and Las Vegas, Nevada, 100 miles northeast. The WSA includes 57,036 acres of public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1,898 acres of lands belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totalling 745 acres. No split-estate lands exist within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern boundary follows the road from Paymaster Mine southeast and then trends north then east for one mile until it intersects with Kelbaker Road, which it follows southwest for two miles. The eastern boundary follows a utility line maintenance road trending south. The southern boundary follows along the northern berm of the utility line maintenance road for ten miles, cherrystemming a route and surface disturbance associated with the Old Dad Mine which extends six miles into the WSA. The southern boundary then jogs northwest one mile and follows the northern berm of the Union Pacific Railroad line heading west. Roughly three miles west of the railroad siding of Balch, the WSA's western boundary turns northeast following along an unmaintained road which skirts the southern rim of Soda Lake, excluding the Cowhole Mountains, until it intersects with a utility gas transmission line road which forms the balance of the northern boundary.

All of the study area is within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated by the Secretary of the Interior in conjunction with approval of the California Desert Plan in 1980. The study area contains a variety of landforms, geographical features, and vegetative types. Of particular significance is the Mojave river sink, occupying the southern portion of the area, which grades from flat, rocky terrain on the west to mesquite-covered sand hummocks and small dunes in the central portion. Other landforms include the large, steep-sided Old Dad Mountain and the smaller rugged Cowhole Mountains. The low, sand-blanketed hills of Devil's Playground occur in the southwestern portion.

Except for the sand hummock area, which supports a community of mesquite and other sand tolerant plants, vegetation throughout the overall study area is sparse, consisting mostly of creosote and mixed shrubs.

Old Dad Mountain is considered important habitat for the desert bighorn sheep (See Special Features). No other BLM sensitive species and no State or Federally listed species are known to occur in the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0 acres recommended
for wilderness
57,036 BLM acres recommended for
nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in the WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The nonsuitable recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the area does not possess any unique or outstanding features that are not represented in areas either already part of, or recommended for inclusion within the National Wilderness Preservation System; (2) the area's value as wilderness is overshadowed by its value for motorized recreation, mineral development and energy transmission; (3) large portions of the study area have moderate to high occurrence potential for one or more of the following commodities: iron, copper, limestone, lead and gold; (4) the northeastern corner of the WSA is classified by the U.S. Geological Survey as prospectively valuable for geothermal resources; and (5) the special features within the WSA can be protected under existing management guidelines. There are approximately 22 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

The WSA's topography and vegetation are very similar to that found in the surrounding wilderness study areas. There are no unique special features in this WSA not currently represented in other areas recommended for wilderness designation. An abundance of areas in the general region are recommended for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The study area is within 50 air miles of ten BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation.

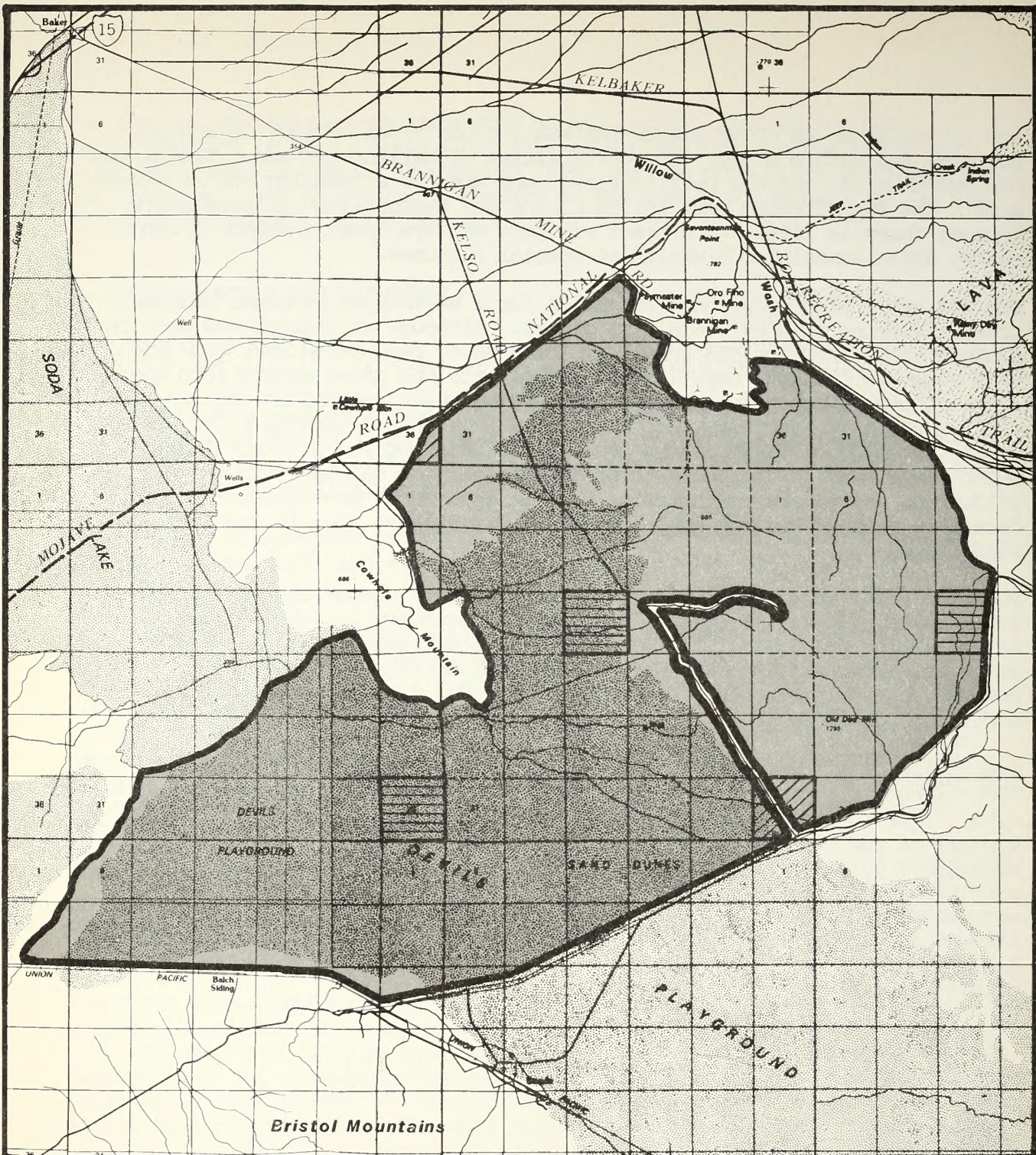
Recreational use of the WSA is less than 1,000 visitor-use days annually. The most popular activities are off-highway vehicle (OHV) sightseeing and touring. Adjacent to the western boundary of the WSA, the sand-blanketed hills of the Devil's Playground receive extensive use as a motorized vehicle play area. The old abandoned Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad, now a motorized vehicle route, traverses the Devil's Playground in a north-south direction two miles west of the WSA boundary. This area receives an estimated 2,000-3,000 visitors during holiday weekends with some use spilling over into the WSA. Most recreation use is generated locally from the Baker, California, area, as the WSA's proximity is ideal for day-use visits. Other

activities known to occur within the WSA include rockhounding, upland game hunting, and nature study. The Universities of California, among others, use Old Dad Mountain and the Devil's Playground area as a teaching and research site. The WSA attracts very little hiking and backpacking use presumably because there is little to attract visitors who are drawn instead to other nearby areas containing a wealth of special features.

The WSA has a high occurrence potential for a variety of minerals and is presently encumbered by 276 mining claims. Although an attempt was made to exclude mines from the WSA which have been major past producers, geologic data suggests that the deposits associated with the mines extend into the area. In the event of wilderness designation, BLM's assessment of the WSA's mineral potential suggests that the majority of the 276 claims would prove valid. Holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with development, which would make it difficult to protect wilderness values. Since the wilderness values are not notable, the WSA appears to have greater value for carefully managed mineral exploration and development than it does for wilderness.

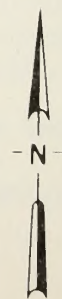
Potential conflicts with the development of future communication and energy transmission facilities exist. The southern boundary is within a four- to six-mile wide energy and utility transmission corridor identified by the State of California in their Western Regional Corridor Study (1980). However, the CDCA Plan did not designate this as a utility corridor and no additional development is proposed due to its location within the EMNSA.

Protection of wilderness and other resource values is being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the EMNSA Plan completed in 1988. These actions include restrictions on the use of firearms, potential closure of routes of travel and enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas. The resource values in the WSA would be managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's limited and intensive use guidelines, coupled with restrictions outlined in existing management plans, serve to lessen potential impacts to resources within the WSA.



- | | |
|---|---|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">NONE</div> | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
| <div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 20px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div> | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |
| <div style="background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, black 2px, black 4px); width: 20px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div> | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |

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| <div style="background: repeating-linear-gradient(90deg, transparent, transparent 2px, black 2px, black 4px); width: 20px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div> | STATE |
| <div style="background: repeating-linear-gradient(135deg, transparent, transparent 2px, black 2px, black 4px); width: 20px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div> | PRIVATE |



**Old Dad Mountains
Proposal**
MAP-1

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-243
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	57,036
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		1,898
Private		745
Total		<u>59,679</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	57,036
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>57,036</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Overall, the area has been affected primarily by natural forces with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable. Signs of man's presence include a route which extends some five miles into the study area from the WSA's northern boundary and connects to the cherrystemmed road leading to a reclaimed mining activity authorized during the interim phase of wilderness study management. Localized impacts from this operation alter the naturalness within this

portion of the study area. Occasional mining claim markers and a loose network of old mining access routes also occur throughout the remainder of the study area. The routes located in washes are subject to flash flooding, therefore erasing their evidence on a regular basis.

2. Solitude: The area's varied topography provides good opportunities for solitude within the secluded canyons of the mountains and the vast open plains. Unobstructed views in many directions enhance the feelings of remoteness in the area.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities for hiking and nature study are enhanced by the lack of man-made intrusions and a well-developed system of washes which provide access to most of the WSA. The diversity of geologic features also provide good opportunities for a wide range of primitive and unconfined types of recreation although these resources are used very little by recreationists who prefer adjacent areas which contain significant special features.
4. Special Features: Scattered thickets of mesquite (Prosopis glandulosa var. torreyana) occur on sand hummocks in the Devil's Playground and are considered an Unusual Plant Assemblage in the CDCA.

The desert bighorn sheep herd of Old Dad Mountain is one of the most noteworthy populations in the CDCA. Estimated at 25 animals in 1969, this herd now numbers in excess of 200 animals, which includes the removal of over 50 sheep over the past two years. These animals were transplanted into other mountain ranges in the desert. Apparently this herd has responded very positively over the past decade to active management and better than average precipitation levels. Two big game guzzlers provide the only permanent water supply for wildlife within the study area.

Good nesting and foraging habitat for raptors and owls exists on Old Dad Mountain and in the surrounding foothills. Specialized forms of wildlife are encountered in the Devils Playground. Sand-dwelling lizards and snakes, such as Mohave fringe-toed lizard, desert iguanas, zebra-tailed lizards, shovel-nosed snakes, and sidewinder rattlesnakes occur in relative abundance.

The western portion of the study area is considered highly sensitive/significant in terms of cultural resources. The mesquite-anchored sand dunes along the southeast perimeter of Soda Dry Lake are known to contain prehistoric temporary camp sites with hearths,

pottery, lithics, and faunal remains. Jack Ass Pass and the west base of Old Dad Mountain is predicted to have unrecorded archaeological sites. Several Native American trails are documented in this area. Some isolated milling stations, pottery loci and numerous trails are located in the sparsely vegetated alluvial fans, and in Devil's Playground area. The Old Dad Mountains are mentioned in both Mojave and Chemehuevi myth. A Chemehuevi salt and general collection area overlaps the upper northwestern area of the WSA.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 57,036 acres of the American Desert/Creosote bush (Larrea) ecosystem. This ecosystem is widespread in the California Desert and is currently represented within the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

<u>Bailey-Kuchler</u> <u>Classification</u> <u>Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,210,873
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,597,069

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of ten BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 180 miles south of the Old Dad Mountain WSA.

C. Manageability

The Old Dad Mountain WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, manageability would be complicated by the displacement of traditional motorized vehicle recreational uses and large zones of moderate to high mineral potential coupled with a large number of mining claims.

A closure to motorized vehicle access into the WSA would be difficult to enforce. Flat sandy terrain near the western boundary along with numerous ways and washes penetrate the WSA boundaries. Extensive four-wheel drive activity takes place in the Devil's Playground area outside of the WSA with some spill off occurring into the WSA. Each of these routes could be signed and/or blocked so as to provide an impenetrable border. However, the range's proximity to the Los Angeles Basin does complicate management as users have had a long history of recreational use of the area. Long-term use patterns may be difficult to turn around. Management as wilderness would require a significant commitment to ensure the integrity of the area would be maintained.

A portion of the WSA is encumbered by mining claims. Because the study area and the surrounding land shows a moderate or high potential for a variety of minerals, it is probable that a high percentage of the area's 276 mining claims would withstand a validity exam. Preservation of the area's wilderness values cannot be assured.

Portions of the Granite Mountain grazing lease cover the WSA. Of the total 7,740 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) available in the lease, approximately 1,830 AUMs (25 percent) are within the boundaries of the WSA. Wilderness designation would constrain construction of new improvements and may restrict maintenance of existing improvements requiring motorized vehicles for access.

Presently, two guzzlers for desert bighorn sheep are located within the WSA. Maintenance of these guzzlers is required approximately two times per year and normally requires mechanized equipment and vehicles for transportation of materials to the site.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Old Dad Mountains WSA is located in the BLM Old Dad Mountain Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). G-E-M resource data in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) for this WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated, and interpreted during the recommendation process in 1980. However, G-E-M data in the EIS stated that the WSA had a potential for geothermal energy resources, potassium, sodium, oil and gas, limestone, gold, silver, lead, and zinc. As of December, 1979 there were three unpatented mining claims recorded with the BLM.

Mineral resource file data for the Old Dad Mountains was not available for review during this summary. Therefore, verification of mineral occurrence potential supporting the EIS statements was made by using only the G-E-M summary evaluation report in the GRA file (GRA report). The G-E-M summary evaluation report was prepared by Charles Sabine (1980). Sabine incorporated the available published literature at that time.

According to the GRA report, the Old Dad Mountain Mine, which consists of massive iron deposits in highly fractured limestone or quartzite, and with associated minor copper, occurs along the Old Dad Fault in the southeastern part of the WSA. This mine is located in the central portion of the WSA but was cherrystemmed out of wilderness study consideration. The deposit is estimated (Wright, L. A. et al., 1953, San Bernardino County Report, CA in the California Journal of Mines and Geology, Vol. 49) to have about 500,000 tons of commercially valuable iron ore. The area surrounding this mine has similar contact metamorphic geology and was classified in the GRA report as having a high occurrence potential for iron and copper. Deposits of iron and copper also occur south of the WSA in the southern part of the Old Dad Mountains. These are small deposits, of no current interest.

Immediately north of the WSA boundary, in the northern part of the Old Dad Mountains, gold, silver, and lead mineralization with associated iron occurs in quartz veins within a Precambrian gneissic complex. The Paymaster, Brannigan, Oro Fino and Comet Mines, all past producers, are located in this area. The G-E-M report stated that the Paymaster Mine produced 1,032 tons of ore between 1932 and 1944 containing 316 ounces of gold and 117 ounces of silver. The Oro Fino Mine produced 528 tons of ore between 1902 and 1948 containing 400 ounces of gold and 20,594 ounces of silver. Uranium was classified as low or as having no occurrence potential within this WSA. Areas of known limestone deposits were classified as having a moderate occurrence potential for limestone according to the GRA report, but they were not further delineated in the report. The sand dunes in the western part of the WSA were not classified.

The occurrence potential for sodium, potassium, oil and gas and other salines lies north of the western boundary in Soda Lake, outside the boundary of the WSA. The peripheral areas of the lake bed do not contain salt deposits based on a test well by the USGS in the late 1970's which show sediments to about 415 feet depth.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral surveys were conducted in this WSA because it is recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation.

A study of the East Mojave Scenic Area, which included this WSA, was made by the BLM. This study compiled data collected and analyzed by the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) for their nonurban land mineral assessment. The findings in this study were published as a BLM report (Evans, J.R., (1986), Mineral Impact Study of a 2,000 Square Mile Area of the East Mojave Desert, San Bernardino County, California). In this study, the BLM followed the CDMG's Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) classification scheme with respect to the presence, absence or likely occurrence of mineral deposits.

The report by Evans showed the central portion of the WSA near the Old Dad Mountains contains large areas with mineral occurrence potential. There are also areas for mineral occurrence in the west-central part of this WSA in the southern Cowhole Mountains. The mineral occurrence potential areas outlined in the East Mojave study reflect the BLM mineral classification system, and are shown on Map 2. These classifications correspond in part to those that were discussed in the GRA report.

In the northeastern portion of the WSA a triangular area is mapped as having a high occurrence potential for gold and silver. Southwest along the flank of the Old Dad Mountains, there is a large rectangular area classified by the CDMG as having a moderate occurrence potential for gold. Near the southern border of the WSA occurs an area with a moderate occurrence potential for gold, iron

and limestone. There are four other classified areas in the Old Dad mountains that include occurrence potential for iron, copper, gold, limestone and silica (quartzite) in different combinations. In the central part of the WSA, the CDMG (Evans, 1985) classified two areas as having a moderate occurrence potential for copper, lead and limestone. This classification by the CDMG is based on known mineralization and the favorable geologic and mineral environment.

The northeastern corner of the WSA is classified prospectively valuable for geothermal resources by the BLM (1982). However, there has been no expressed interest in exploration or development for geothermal resources identified in the 1980 EIS, and no direct physical evidence in the record of geothermal resources. Under the BLM classification system, based solely on geologic inference, this area would be considered as having a low potential for the occurrence of geothermal resources.

Mineral interest has been expressed in the sand dune deposits in the far western one-third of the WSA. No data is available at this time to classify the sand dunes for mineral resource potential.

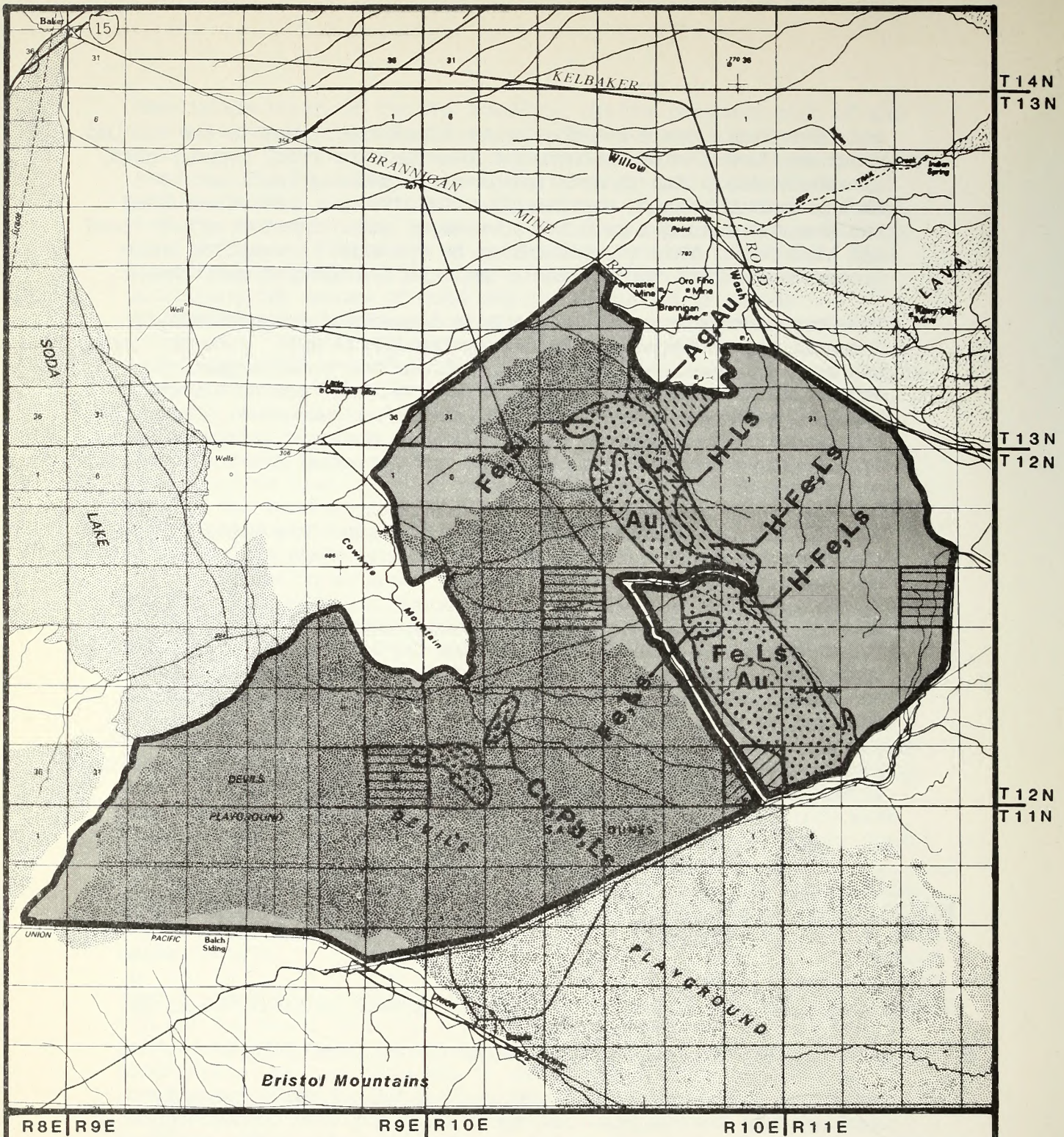
Most of the unpatented placer claims are located in the western two-thirds of the WSA, specifically on the sand dunes of the Devils Playground. The great majority of the 107 unpatented lode claims are within a five mile radius of the Old Dad iron-copper mine, in the central part of the WSA. There has been one plan of operation for mineral exploration filed with the BLM in the WSA. Unpatented mining claims in the WSA are summarized in the following table taken from BLM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	N/A	107	107	N/A	2,140	2,140
Placer	N/A	169	169	N/A	6760	6760
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	276	276	N/A	8,900	8,900

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values will gradually decline over the long-term as exploration and development occurs in areas of moderate to high mineral potential and in areas utilized for OHV recreation.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available. Mining activities would be restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines outlined in the CDCA and EMNSA Plans which limit vehicle access and mitigate adverse effects on sensitive resource values.



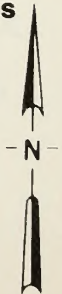
- NONE** Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness**
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness**
- Split Estate**
- State**
- Private**

Explanation

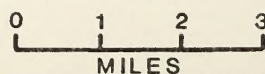
- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals**
- Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals**
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- Ag** Silver
- Au** Gold
- Cu** Copper
- Fe** Iron
- Ls** Limestone
- Pb** Lead
- Si** Silica



Old Dad Mountains
Mineral Resource Potential



MAP-2
CDCA-243

3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the EMNSA Plan.
4. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep Habitat: Impacts to bighorn sheep and their habitat will be negligible, consisting of minor site-specific habitat loss as a result of surface disturbance associated with OHV use and mineral exploration and development. Monitoring and patrol efforts and mitigation measures, to be stipulated as part of any authorized resource development activities, will assure that bighorn sheep receive adequate protection. Extensive baseline data and monitoring studies will be undertaken as outlined in the 1988 EMNSA Plan, with annual review to provide a basis for establishing additional protective measures, if necessary.
5. Impact on Energy and Utility Corridors: Constraints would be placed on expansion of these facilities regardless of wilderness issues. Expansion or development in this corridor identified by the State require an amendment to the CDCA and EMNSA Plans.
6. Impact on Unusual Plant Assemblage: Localized impacts caused by vehicle access and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development will result in a minor adverse impact to this UPA. Management guidelines listed in the CDCA Plan adequately protect this species throughout the WSA.
7. Impact on Cultural Resources: All proposed surface disturbing activities will be subjected to an environmental analysis. Some sites may be unintentionally damaged by casual OHV recreational activity. Existing Federal laws and BLM policy along with restrictions outlined in existing management plans will lessen the magnitude of this loss by requiring avoidance or mitigation of impacts to resources.
8. Impact on Native American Uses and Values: Native American access to traditional religious sites will be retained. Coordination will occur under the guidance of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development

of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Public comment favored inclusion of this area in the wilderness study phase. Many respondents urged the addition of the Mojave River Sink, on the basis of its ecological significance and apparent naturalness. Some comments opposed addition of the Sink area because of its popularity for motorized vehicle use in the Rasor Ranch/Crucero area. Field examination resulted in addition of this area to the WSA.
2. Study Phase: Approximately 83 letters were received on this controversial WSA. Forty-seven, or roughly 57%, favored wilderness for the area, and 36, or 43%, were in opposition. Organized campaigns were run by conservation and motorized vehicle groups to present their positions. Wilderness supporters emphasized the inclusion of the Mojave Sink and Devil's Playground within the WSA. They believed this area had been excluded because of ORV use and that the BLM was committed to this activity in this area. However, they stated that evidence of such use was minor and that the area could be rehabilitated and should be protected as wilderness. Particularly noted were the riparian areas resulting from the outflow of the subsurface Mojave River; these contained desert willow, mesquite, and small sandy dune hummocks and were valuable habitats for wildlife especially the following birds: roadrunners, soras, phainopeplas, Lincoln's sparrows, long-billed marsh wrens, yellow-headed blackbirds, and others.

The variety of vegetation and geologic forms throughout the study area, including dunes, flats, dry lakes (not within the WSA), mountains, small valleys, and canyons, provide outstanding scenic vistas and opportunities for education and primitive recreation. The cultural values of the remnants of the Tonopah and Tidewater railroad (not within the WSA) were also mentioned. One respondent suggested combining WSAs 243, 249, and 250 to create a "Devil's Playground Wilderness Area." Others wanted to add Afton Canyon and Soda Lake to the WSA.

Opponents of wilderness also concentrated their attention on the western portion of the WSA, the Devil's Playground area. These respondents were largely members of families who enjoy such activities as camping, pleasure driving, four-wheeling, hunting, motorcycling, prospecting, and rock climbing. According to one writer, the area is one of the finest rockhounding spots in the nation. Features which detract from wilderness quality were listed, including roads, railroads, mines, water tanks, transmission lines, and houses.

Minerals were another concern for wilderness opponents. Lead, silver, gold, and iron were said to be present, and the western portion of the WSA has potential for geothermal and oil and gas, according to one respondent. The area also has 1,947 acres leased for grazing.

One comment was received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/25/79). The San Diego Gem and Mineral Society stated that road access helps rockhounds get into the area.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: Comments brought out the same points mentioned above. This WSA was one of the many WSAs opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting multiple use designation of intensive use for this area, a classification which would allow unrestricted vehicle access for this area. This was in agreement with the recommendation of the Use Alternative. Conservation organizations and wilderness supporters approved the Protection Alternative's recommendation of controlled use, or wilderness, in this area.
4. Proposed Plan: The Proposed Plan recommended a limited use classification for the entire wilderness study area, bordered by intensive use on the west. Conservation groups were partially content with this recommendation, although there were still many people who wanted wilderness in this unit. The NOC organization continued the same position as for the Draft Plan Amendments.

No comments were received from the local governments.

Rainbow Wells

CDCA 244

RAINBOW WELLS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-244)

1. THE STUDY AREA —

23,105 acres

The Rainbow Wells WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeast portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest communities are Baker, California, 13 miles northwest, and Las Vegas, Nevada, 80 miles northeast. The WSA includes 21,887 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 581 acres of land belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totalling approximately 637 acres. No split-estate land exists within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 and Table 1).

Beginning at Rainbow Wells in the southeast corner of the WSA, the boundary traverses north following the west edge of a maintained telephone line road for five miles. The boundary then turns southwest following a graded ranch road for four miles. At this point, the boundary turns south following along the base of three unnamed cinder cones until it connects with Aikens Mine Road which it follows for two miles where it meets with Kelbaker Road. The boundary then follows Kelbaker Road east for three miles until it intersects with the north edge of a utility transmission line right-of-way which forms five miles of the south boundary.

The study area is within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated by the Secretary of the Interior in conjunction with approval of the California Desert Plan in 1980. Situated at a base elevation of 3,200 feet, the WSA contains alluvial bajadas dotted by a complex of eight to ten cinder cones. The cinder cones region of the EMNSA, which extends beyond the boundaries of this WSA to include the suitably recommended Cinder Cones WSA (CDCA-239), contains over 30 volcanoes interspersed with extensive lava fields. This lava field is designated as a National Natural Landmark and an Outstanding Natural Area. Overall, 4700 acres were withdrawn from mineral entry in 1972. Approximately 35% of the withdrawn lands are within the Rainbow Wells WSA. The EMNSA Plan proposes expansion of this withdrawal to include 20,320 acres which would encompass the majority of this WSA.

As might be expected, vegetation within the Rainbow Wells WSA is sparse in most areas. However, off the edge of the lava flows there are good representations of Mojave Desert flora and fauna. Creosote bush, brittlebush, and white bur sage occur where pockets of soil have accumulated in the lava flows. Washes and bajadas support a creosote bush scrub community with plants growing rather widely spaced across the area. Mojave yucca occurs at the higher elevations within the WSA along with a scattered stand of Joshua trees. The cinder cones and lava flows support little, if any vegetation, as most of the cinder cones are too steep and unstable to allow the establishment of vegetation. No BLM sensitive plants or Federal- or State-listed rare, threatened, or endangered plants are known to occur in this WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. <u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> ---	0	acres recommended for wilderness
	21,887	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The nonsuitable recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the WSA does not contain any noteworthy special features not currently protected under an existing mineral withdrawal; (2) there is almost no demand for primitive recreational opportunities within this WSA; (3) there is a considerable demand for continued motorized vehicle use along the Mojave Road; (4) large portions of the area have moderate to high potential for one or more of the following commodities: gold, copper, lead and cinders; and (5) manageability as wilderness would conflict with the utility corridor identified by the State of California in their Western Regional Corridor Study (1980).

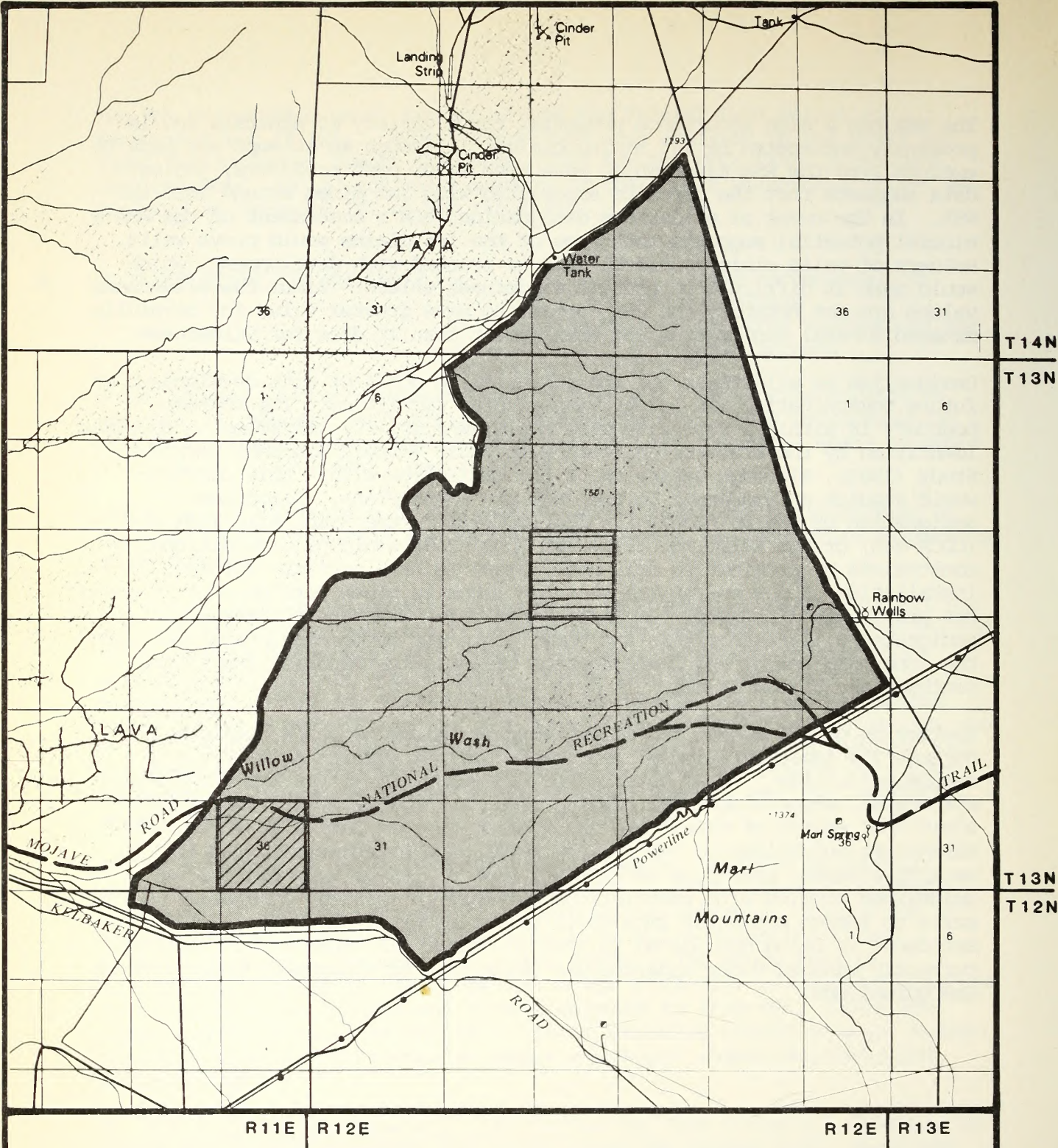
The Rainbow Wells WSA, while natural in character, contains no unusual features or resources not currently protected under an existing mineral withdrawal or proposed for additional protective actions. Designation of this area as wilderness would not contribute to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). The study area is ecologically similar to the Cinder Cones WSA (CDCA-239) recommended suitable for wilderness designation and located adjacent to this WSA. There are approximately 35 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

The WSA receives approximately 1000 visitor-use days annually. This use is almost exclusively motorized for travel along the Mojave Road. Each year enthusiasts and "Friends of the Mojave Road" retrace the route of early explorers and pioneers across the Mojave desert. Hunting for upland game is also popular. Demand for primitive recreational opportunities in this WSA is almost nonexistent. The area receives little use presumably because there is little to attract visitors, who are drawn instead to other nearby areas containing a wealth of special features.


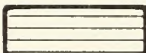
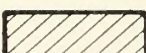
The WSA has a high occurrence potential for a variety of minerals and is presently encumbered by 145 mining claims. Although an attempt was made to exclude from the WSA mines which have been major past producers, geologic data suggests that the deposits associated with the mines extend into the WSA. In the event of wilderness designation, BLM's assessment of the WSA's mineral potential suggests that some of the 145 claims would prove valid. Holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with development, which would make it difficult to protect wilderness values. Since the wilderness values are not notable, the WSA appears to have greater value for carefully managed mineral exploration and development than it does for wilderness.

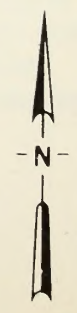
Designation as wilderness has the potential to conflict with development of future communication and energy transmission facilities. The southern boundary is within a four-mile wide energy and utility transmission corridor identified by the State of California in their Western Regional Corridor Study (1980). Although expansion of the facilities within this corridor would require an amendment to the CDCA and EMNSA Plans, wilderness designation of the Rainbow Wells WSA (CDCA-244), the Eight Mile Tank WSA (CDCA-245) or the Kelso Mountains WSA (CDCA-249) would place additional constraints by prohibiting full development in this corridor forcing installation of new energy transmission lines in other corridors or in areas not previously disturbed. Depending upon which WSAs are ultimately designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may be constraints placed upon the long-term energy and communication transmission capabilities in the southwestern United States.

Protection of wilderness and other resource values is being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the EMNSA Plan completed in 1988. These actions include expansion of the existing mineral withdrawal, stipulations for camping along the Mojave Road, closure of additional routes of travel and enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's limited and moderate use guidelines coupled with restrictions outlined in existing management plans serve to lessen potential impacts to resources within the WSA. A plan amendment is being considered in 1988 to change all lands within the EMNSA currently managed under moderate use guidelines to management under limited use guidelines.

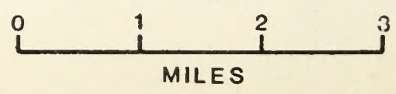


-  NONE
-  RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
-  RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS
-  LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

-  SPLIT ESTATE
-  STATE
-  PRIVATE



**Rainbow Wells
Proposal**
MAP-1



CDCA-244
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	21,887
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		581
Private		637
Total		<u>23,105</u>
 <u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		 <u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
 <u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		 <u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	21,887
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>21,887</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area has been affected primarily by natural forces with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable. Man's works, which include a few primitive ways, are all substantially unnoticeable due to screening by terrain and vegetation.
2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude are available within the WSA. The variation in topography from the cinder cones, which rise 300 feet above the surrounding lands, to the large, white, sandy washes and bajadas offer a variety of areas where solitude can be achieved without disruption.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Although the WSA does provide good opportunities for a primitive recreational experience, it has attracted almost no use of this type at present.
4. Special Features: Approximately four square miles of desert tortoise habitat exists within the WSA with densities of up to 50 individuals per square mile. The desert tortoise is a protected species in the State of California and also currently under status review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for listing as a threatened species.

The known record of cultural resources within this WSA includes three sites. Two of the sites are associated with rock rings used as house circles or hunting blinds, stone tool manufacturing debris and two milling stations. These sites indicate temporary occupation of the area on a seasonal or intermittent basis.

The third site involves the Mojave Road, a prehistoric trade and travel route which courses through seven miles of the WSA. The route served as a major thoroughfare in the settlement of Southern California and has been nominated as a National Recreation Trail. The WSA is within the Cinder Cone region of the EMNSA. The region contains over 30 cones interspersed with extensive lava fields and is designated as National Natural Landmark and Outstanding Natural Area. Overall, 4,700 acres, of which 35% is within the WSA, are withdrawn from mineral entry.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 21,887 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. The examples of cinder cones and lava flows contained within the Rainbow Wells WSA are well represented in the suitably recommended Cinder Cones WSA (CDCA-239) located adjacent to this study area. This province is widespread throughout the California Desert and is currently represented in areas recommended for wilderness designation.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

<u>Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,246,022
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,632,218

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of six major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of nine BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation; eight are within the CDCA and one is administered by Nevada's Las Vegas District. The closest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 170 miles south of the Rainbow Wells WSA.

C. Manageability

The Rainbow Wells WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, manageability is complicated by the following factors: (1) large zones of moderate to high mineral potential coupled with a large number of mining claims; and (2) the presence of the Mojave Road recreational trail.

The WSA contains areas of moderate to high potential for a variety of minerals and is presently encumbered by 145 unpatented mining claims. Although wilderness designation would withdraw the area from claim location, BLM's assessment of the area's mineral potential suggests that some of the existing claims would prove valid. Holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with developments deemed necessary or reasonably incidental to their mining operation, subject only to not causing unnecessary or undue degradation. This provision would do little to protect wilderness values, as even necessary mining developments could significantly alter natural conditions at the site and potentially disrupt opportunities for solitude over a much greater area.

Designation as wilderness would also conflict with continued motorized vehicle use of the Mojave Road as roughly seven miles of the road would be closed to any further motorized use. This closure would likely generate organized opposition from regional and national groups and would prove extremely difficult to keep off limits to vehicles. Should the area be designated as wilderness, the Bureau is recommending that a corridor be established within the WSA which would allow for continued use of the Mojave Road.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Rainbow Wells WSA is in the BLM Cima Dome Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). Mineral resource data in the 1980 G-E-M portion of the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) for this WSA

had not been fully analyzed, integrated, and interpreted during the recommendation process. G-E-M data in the EIS did state that this WSA had a potential for geothermal energy and metals. Eight unpatented mining claims were on record with the BLM in the WSA as of December, 1979.

Mineral resource data for the Cima Dome GRA file was not available for review during this summary although an extensive field note file and the G-E-M report were available. Verification of the mineral occurrence potential that may have been available in 1980 to support that conclusion in the EIS cannot be made from the 1980 GRA file data.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No USGS or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys were conducted in this WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

In 1982, the G-E-M evaluation report by Susan Marcus (1982, An Evaluation of the Cima Dome Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area), who derived her information from California Division of Mines (CDMG) publication by J.G. Goodwin (1957, Lead and Zinc in California, California Division of Mines, Journal of Mines and Geology, Vol. 53), indicated that the southeastern part of this WSA has a high occurrence potential for gold, copper, lead and a low occurrence potential for tungsten. The report stated that the Rainbow Mine and mill lies one-quarter mile outside the southeastern corner of this WSA, between Cima Dome WSA and Rainbow Wells WSA. The main development on the Rainbow Mine consisted of a 65-foot deep inclined shaft and adit, with minor mine workings, including shallow shafts and prospect pits, within the southeastern corner of the WSA. Copper, gold and lead mineralization was noted as occurring in quartz veins in porphyritic quartz monzonite. Tungsten mineralization was also found at the mine site by the CDMG in 1982 (personal communications with S. Marcus) but is considered to be minor and very localized, therefore of low occurrence potential. A mill for processing the copper-gold-lead ore existed near the WSA boundary in the same general vicinity as the mine, and is reported to have produced 134 tons of gold, copper and lead ore prior to 1951. This mill has been idle for approximately 35 years and was sold in 1976.

A study of a portion of the East Mojave Scenic Area, which included the WSA, was made by the BLM. This study compiled data collected and analyzed by the CDMG for their nonurban land mineral assessment. The findings in this study were published as a BLM report (Evans, J.R., (1986), Mineral Impact Study of a 2,000 Square Mile Area of the East Mojave Desert, San Bernardino County, California).

In the study by Evans, the BLM followed the CDMG's Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) classification scheme with respect to the presence, absence or likely occurrence of mineral deposits. The report by Evans showed that the largely alluvial-covered pediment surfaces of the Rainbow Wells WSA were classified as having unknown mineral occurrence potential, with two exceptions. The one exception is the southeastern corner of the WSA where an area of granitic outcrop is classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold, lead, and copper, and the other is an area of isolated and scattered volcanic cinder cones classified as having a high potential for the occurrence of cinder deposits under the BLM classification system.

The southeastern part of the WSA, classified as having a moderate occurrence potential for copper, lead and gold, corresponds, for the most part, with the quartz monzonite outcrop. Also, a high occurrence potential for volcanic cinders is outlined in five different places, in the mid-west and northeastern portions of the WSA, with the possibility of additional cinder deposits in the WSA. These areas correspond to those discussed in the G-E-M report but the extent of the potential occurrence for cinders is better defined, and the area is reclassified for gold-copper-lead potential in the southeastern part of the WSA from high to a moderate occurrence potential.

The WSA is classified by the BLM (1982) as prospectively valuable for geothermal resources. Under the BLM mineral resource classification, however, the geothermal occurrence potential is considered low due to favorable geologic environment, but little or no interest. There was no expressed interest or plans filed with the BLM for mining or exploration in this WSA. The Aikens Cinder Mine lies adjacent to the western boundary of the WSA. Since 1961, large tonnages of cinders have been mined for cinder blocks from the Aikens quarry area.

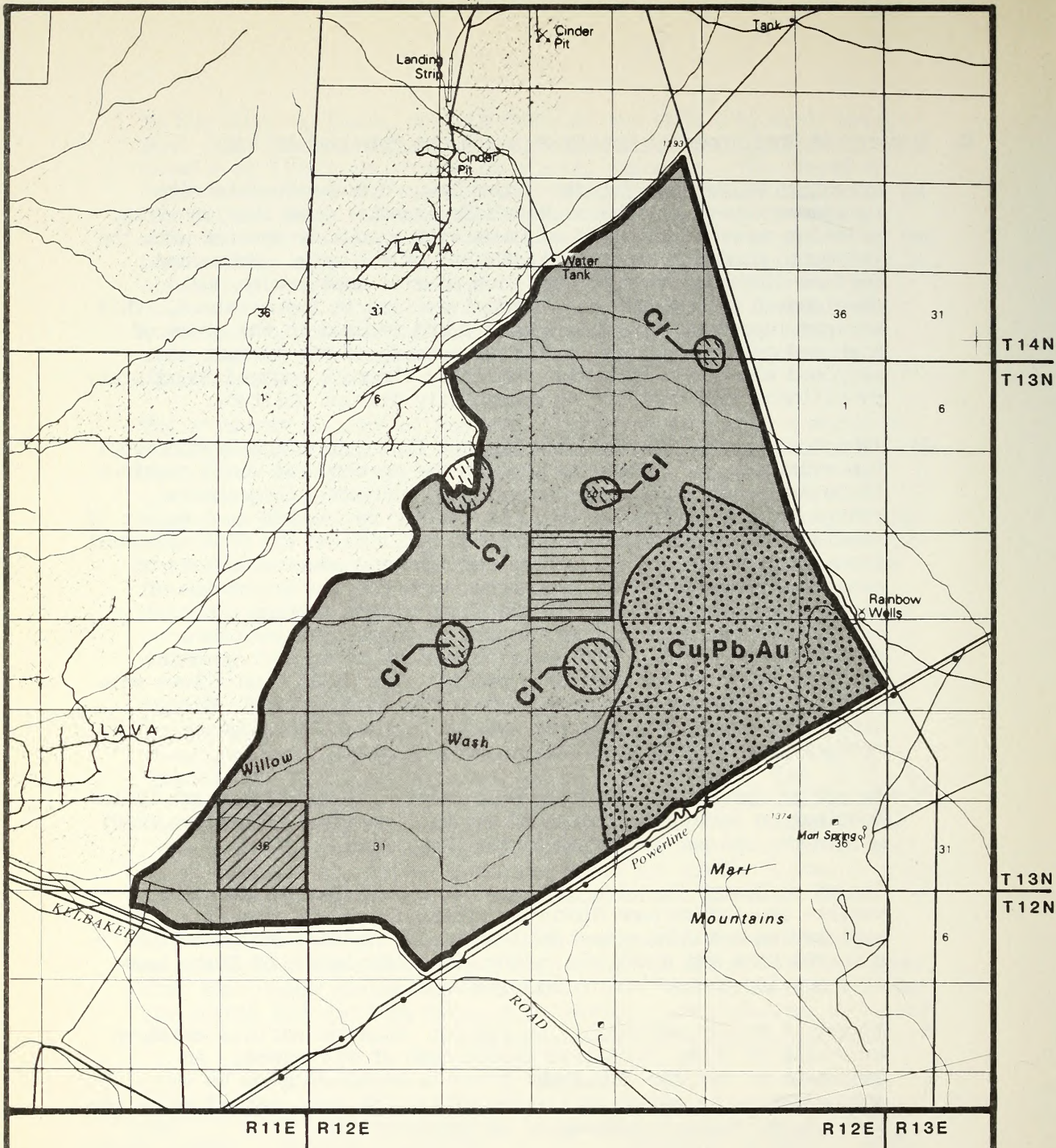
As of December, 1987, there were 145 unpatented placer claims recorded with the BLM (Table 4). A review of the BLM records shows that the placer claims are distributed over the entire WSA; however, the middle and southern parts show heavier concentrations of mining claims.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Placer	N/A	145	145	N/A	5800	5800
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	145	145	N/A	5800	5800

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Under low and moderate intensity management there will be no immediate impact. Over the long-term, existing opportunities for solitude will gradually decline with the projected gradually increasing OHV use of the area. Noise and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development will result in a gradual decline in these values. This adverse impact will be site-specific and focused in the areas of high and moderate mineral potential outside of the current and proposed mineral withdrawals. Military aircraft engaged in military overflights will continue to momentarily disrupt solitude.
2. Impact on Locateable /Saleable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available outside of the area not withdrawn from mineral entry. Mining activities would be further restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines outlined in the CDCA and EMNSA Plans which limit vehicle access and mitigate adverse effects on sensitive resource values. Opportunities for the extraction of cinders would be precluded in the areas withdrawn from mineral entry. Authorization for extraction of these materials is a discretionary action, and would be subject to an environmental analysis prior to issuance of a permit. The EMNSA Plan allows sale of cinders only for local road repair and construction. Since cinders are available in areas outside of the EMNSA, any authorization within the EMNSA is most doubtful.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel (including the Mojave Road) within the WSA as identified in the EMNSA Plan.
4. Impact on Desert Tortoise Habitat: Localized impacts caused by vehicle use and surface disturbance associated and mineral exploration and development will be minor. Management guidelines in the CDCA Plan and EMNSA Plan along with enforcement of State laws will provide protection of this species.
5. Impact on Energy and Utility Corridors: Constraints will exist on expansion of these facilities independent of wilderness. An amendment to the CDCA and EMNSA Plans is required prior to any authorization to expand facilities within the area identified by the State as an energy/transmission utility corridor.
6. Impact on Cultural Resources: Some loss of archaeological values will occur as a result of mineral exploration and development. This loss will be localized, primarily concentrated in the areas of moderate and high mineral potential located outside of the areas withdrawn from mineral entry. Federal laws and BLM policy, along with restrictions outlined in existing management plans, will lessen the magnitude of this loss by requiring extensive mitigation or avoidance of any impacts to these sites.



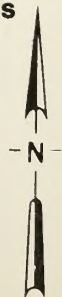
- | | | |
|--|------|---|
| | NONE | Recommended for Wilderness |
| | | Recommended for Non Wilderness |
| | | Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness |
| | | Split Estate |
| | | State |
| | | Private |

Explanation

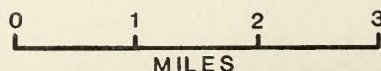
- | | |
|----------|--|
| | High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| | Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| M | Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area |
| H | High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area |

Commodity Symbols

- | | |
|-----------|---------|
| Au | Gold |
| CI | Cinders |
| Cu | Copper |
| Pb | Lead |



**Rainbow Wells
Mineral Resource Potential**



**MAP-2
CDCA-244**

7. Impact on National Natural Landmark and Outstanding Natural Area: Impacts on the cinder cones within these regions will not be significant as the majority of the cones are withdrawn from mineral entry.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: The majority of comments received supported the findings.
2. Study Phase: Of the 29 letters received on this WSA, 25 favored wilderness, one wanted to protect the geological features but was not sure a wilderness recommendation was the best way, and three opposed wilderness. One or more organizations conducted a letter writing campaign to encourage a wilderness recommendation for WSA 244 and adjoining units. Their reasons included the following: The unique granite "bubble" of the dome, the cinder cones, the Joshua tree forest, the extensive grasslands which are relatively rare in the desert, the stark scenic contrast of white sand and black lava, the outdoor classroom study opportunities for geologists and naturalists, productive wildlife habitat, washes, archaeological values, and habitat for the rare Cima rattleweed. (This is listed on the CNPS List 2 as rare and endangered. It has no official status.) All of these features provided excellent opportunities for education and primitive recreation, including hiking, photography, backpacking, camping, and so forth. Several respondents mentioned that grazing is compatible with wilderness.

Opponents of wilderness mentioned the need to carry out exploration for oil and gas and geothermal resources. Features which they thought detracted from the area's wilderness potential and its ability to provide opportunities for solitude and for primitive recreation included transmission lines, a road, and mining activities.

No letters were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79).

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were few comments specific to this WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this was one of the many which were opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting multiple use classification of moderate use for this area. This was in agreement with the recommendation of the Use Alternative. Conservation group members preferred the Balanced Alternative, which recommended limited use or the Protection Alternative which recommended controlled use, or wilderness.
4. Proposed Plan: Conservation groups asked specifically for stronger management for the Cima Dome area than that offered by the Plan's proposed National Natural Landmark designation. Organizations such as NOC maintained the same position as for the Draft Plan Alternatives.

No comments were received from local governments.

Eight-Mile Tank

CDCA 245

EIGHT-MILE TANK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-245)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

23,773 acres

The Eight-Mile Tank WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA (named for a long used livestock water source) includes 22,473 acres of public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 450 acres of lands belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totaling approximately 850 acres. No split-estate lands exist within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 and Table 1).

One mile south of the small community of Cima, the eastern boundary follows Kelso-Cima Road south for four and one-half miles cherrystemming the one mile of road and grazing improvements within T. 13 N., R. 14 E., Section 31. At the intersection of Cima Road and the gas pipeline maintenance road, the boundary turns west following the northern berm of this road for six miles where it intersects with a utility line and maintenance road. The boundary then follows this utility line north. At the intersection of the utility line road and the transmission line road, the north boundary turns northeast for six miles then south for two miles, excluding private lands, until it intersects with the paved Cima Road.

Two special designations overlay the WSA. All of the study area is within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated by the Secretary of the Interior in conjunction with approval of the California Desert Plan in 1980. Additionally, portions of the Mojave Road traverse the WSA east-west. The road, currently used as a scenic and historic motorized recreation route has been nominated as a National Historic Trail.

The Eight-Mile Tank WSA consists of 90% alluvial fans and 10% mountains. Topography is essentially flat to a gently sloping bajada with the exception of some small, isolated foothills located about one mile east of the Marl Mountains. Here, the terrain is relatively rough and steep; the highest peak being 4,269 feet above sea level and extending some 1,500 feet above the valley floor. Numerous deeply eroded washes cut through this north-south trending ridge, which for the most part, are impassable to vehicle travel. Two smaller granitic rock outcrops occur in the northeast portion covering approximately one square mile of the WSA. The bajada contains small reddish-brown washes and playas that are covered with uniform patterns of creosote and associated creosote bush scrub plant communities.

The vegetation of this WSA is predominantly creosote bush scrub along with a variety of shrubs, leaf-succulents, succulents, and grasses. Creosote bush, white bur-sage, wild buckwheat, brittlebrush, desert cassia, joint-firs, pencil cholla, buckhorn cholla, silver cholla, hedgehog cactus, Mojave yucca, big galleta, sand dropseed and fluffgrass are some of the more common plants in the WSA. The extreme northern end of the WSA lies within the Cima Dome Joshua tree forest, which is classified by the California Desert Plan as an

Unusual Plant Assemblage (UPA). This area supports a widely scattered stand of Joshua trees (Yucca brevifolia var. jaegeriana) that increases in density as the elevation increases to the north.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 0 acres recommended for wilderness
22,473 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The addition of the Eight-Mile Tank WSA to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) would not add to the diversity or uniqueness of the system, nor would it add significantly to the wilderness recreational opportunities available in the region. These factors, combined with the fact that this WSA has only marginal wilderness values, led to the nonwilderness recommendation.

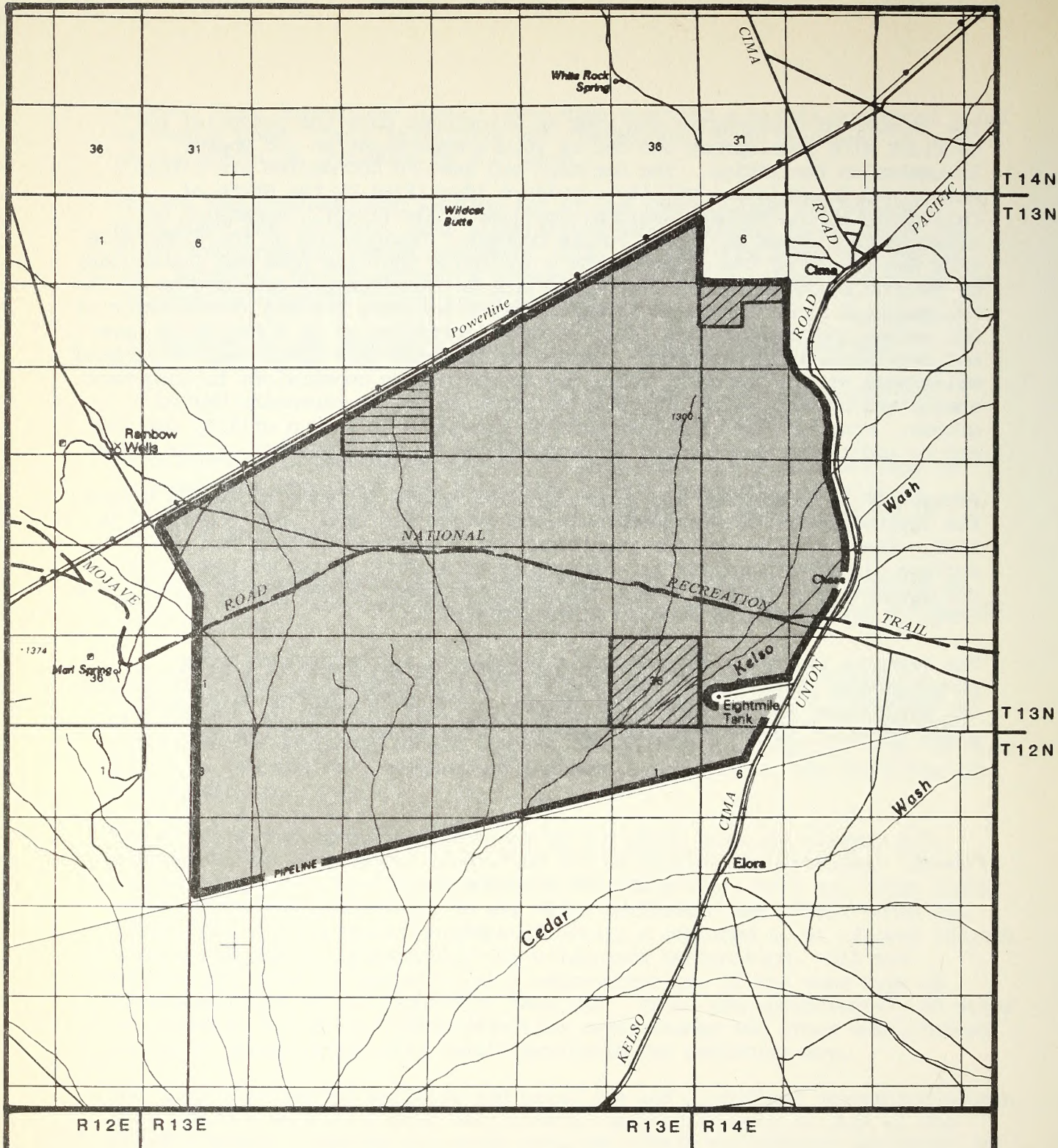
The landform and ecosystem exhibited by the study area are already well represented in other areas identified for wilderness preservation. Three nearby WSAs, North Providence Mountain WSA (CDCA-263), nine air miles south; Castle Peaks WSA (CDCA-266), 16 air miles northeast; and Cinder Cones WSA (CDCA-239), six air miles northwest, contain a combined total of over 120,000 acres which BLM is recommending for wilderness designation. All are mountainous, and all contain better representations of the same type of ecosystem found in the Eight-Mile Tank WSA. There are approximately 25 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

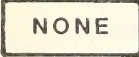


The opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation within this WSA only minimally meet the criteria defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. Because the study area has little topographic variation and is in close proximity to the well-travelled Cima Road, it is difficult to escape the sights and sounds of civilization. These outside sights and sounds detract from the sense of solitude and remoteness to be experienced within the area. Although the WSA is still predominantly natural, the degree of other wilderness resource values, including opportunities or solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are inferior to many locations within the WSAs discussed above.


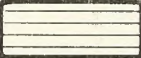

The impacts of designating the area as wilderness have the potential to conflict with development and use of future communication and energy transmission facilities. The northern and eastern boundaries are within energy and transmission utility corridors identified by the State of California in the Western Regional Corridor Study (1980). Expansion of existing facilities will be a future concern. Designation of the Eight-Mile Tank WSA or any of the adjacent WSA's including the Cima Dome WSA (CDCA-238B) or Rainbow Wells WSA (CDCA-244) would prohibit any further development of the transmission line facilities along the north boundary forcing installation of new energy and transmission lines in other corridors or in areas which have not been previously disturbed. Depending upon the WSAs ultimately designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may or may not be constraints to long-term energy and communication transmission needs in the southwestern United States. However, the CDCA Plan did not designate this as a utility corridor and no additional development is proposed due to its traversal of the EMNSA.

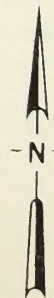
Protection of wilderness and other resource values is being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the EMNSA Plan completed in 1988. These actions include requirement of a performance bond for all surface disturbing activities, closure of additional routes of travel and enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas.

The resource values in the WSA would be managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's low intensity limited use guidelines coupled with restrictions outlined in existing management plans serve to lessen potential impacts to resources within the WSA.



- | | | |
|---|------|---|
|  | NONE | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
|  | | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |
|  | | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
|  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | STATE |
|  | PRIVATE |



**Eight-Mile Tank
Proposal**
MAP-1

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-245
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	22,473
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		450
Private		850
Total		<u>23,773</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	22,473
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>22,473</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The majority of the WSA is affected primarily by the forces of nature and is free from man's influence. The Mojave Road which bisects the WSA from east to west is visible from higher elevations as is an abandoned mine and a primitive route located in the central portion of the study area.
2. Solitude: The WSA is relatively unconfined in nature and is of a size that offers good opportunities for solitude although these opportunities are somewhat limited by the noise associated with vehicle traffic on Cima Road and noise from passing trains located adjacent to the Cima Road.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The lack of any noticeable man-made intrusions enhances these opportunities. However, the lack of any topographical variation limits serves to lessen one's opportunities for this experience.
4. Special Features: The WSA contains 15 to 20 square miles of moderately important desert tortoise habitat with population densities reaching 100 individuals per square mile. The desert tortoise is a BLM sensitive species in the State of California and is currently under status review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for listing as a threatened species. No State- or Federally- listed species of wildlife are known to occur in the WSA.

The Mojave Road was originally one of several aboriginal foot trails used for trade by Native American groups enroute from northern Arizona to the Los Angeles Basin. The route connects evenly spaced water sources. During the 19th century it was developed for use as a pack trail for trappers, explorers and mountain men, including such prominent historic figures as Jedediah Strong Smith and Christopher "Kit" Carson. The Mojave Road served as a major route into and through the lower Mojave desert. Its desolate course was followed by countless emigrants, prospectors and miners, settlers, ranchers and military forces. The Mojave Road was the lifeblood for communication to and from Prescott, Arizona, serving the route of the U.S. Postal Service from 1883 to the coming of the railroads. The road quickly fell into disuse and only recently has been retraced. It is currently used as a scenic and historically appealing recreation route with the long splendid vistas and the remnants of old Army posts found along the way.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System
(NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 22,473 acres of the American Desert/Creosote bush ecosystem. Designation of the study area would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the NWPS. Other suitably recommended WSA's throughout the EMNSA and the CDCA offer a more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,245,436
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,631,632

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of six major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 11 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is within Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 120 miles southwest of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Eight-Mile Tank WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, manageability would be complicated by several issues.

Wilderness designation would preclude motorized vehicle use along the historic Mojave Road thereby displacing this traditional use. Should the area be designated as wilderness, the BLM is recommending that a corridor be established for continued motorized vehicle use along the eight miles of the Mojave Road which bisects the WSA. Such use would be consistent with wilderness management and subject to the limitations outlined in the EMNSA Plan.

Portions of the Kessler Springs Grazing Allotment exist within the study area. Of the total 9,703 animal unit months (AUMs) available, approximately 455 AUMs are within the boundaries of the WSA. The lease will continue to be administered according to the existing allotment management plan. Wilderness designation would constrain the frequency of traditional motorized vehicle access for maintenance of existing improvements and maintenance of range improvements constructed after wilderness designation.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Eight-Mile Tank WSA is in the BLM Cima Dome Geology-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 indicated that the mineral resource data for this WSA had not been fully integrated, analyzed and interpreted at the time of the wilderness recommendation. It also indicated that the data collected at the time was insufficient to evaluate the mineral resource potential of the WSA.
2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys were conducted in the WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

A resource status map and report were prepared by the BLM that outlined the mineral occurrence potential of this WSA based on mineral resource inventories conducted by the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG). The results of this study were published in May, 1986 as a BLM report (Evans, J.R., 1986, Mineral Impact Study of a 2,000 Square Mile Area of the East Mojave Desert, San Bernardino County, California).

The accompanying mineral resource occurrence map is based on the work by Evans and the CDMG using the BLM mineral resource classification scheme. Accordingly, there are two small areas that have moderate occurrence potential for metals. A small area in the northwestern corner of the WSA, about one mile south of the cluster of small gold mines at Rainbow Wells has a moderate potential for the occurrence of copper, lead and gold. A small area near the center of the WSA is indicated as having a moderate occurrence potential for tungsten. Both of these areas occur in weakly mineralized Cretaceous-Tertiary intrusive rocks. There has been no recorded production from either location.

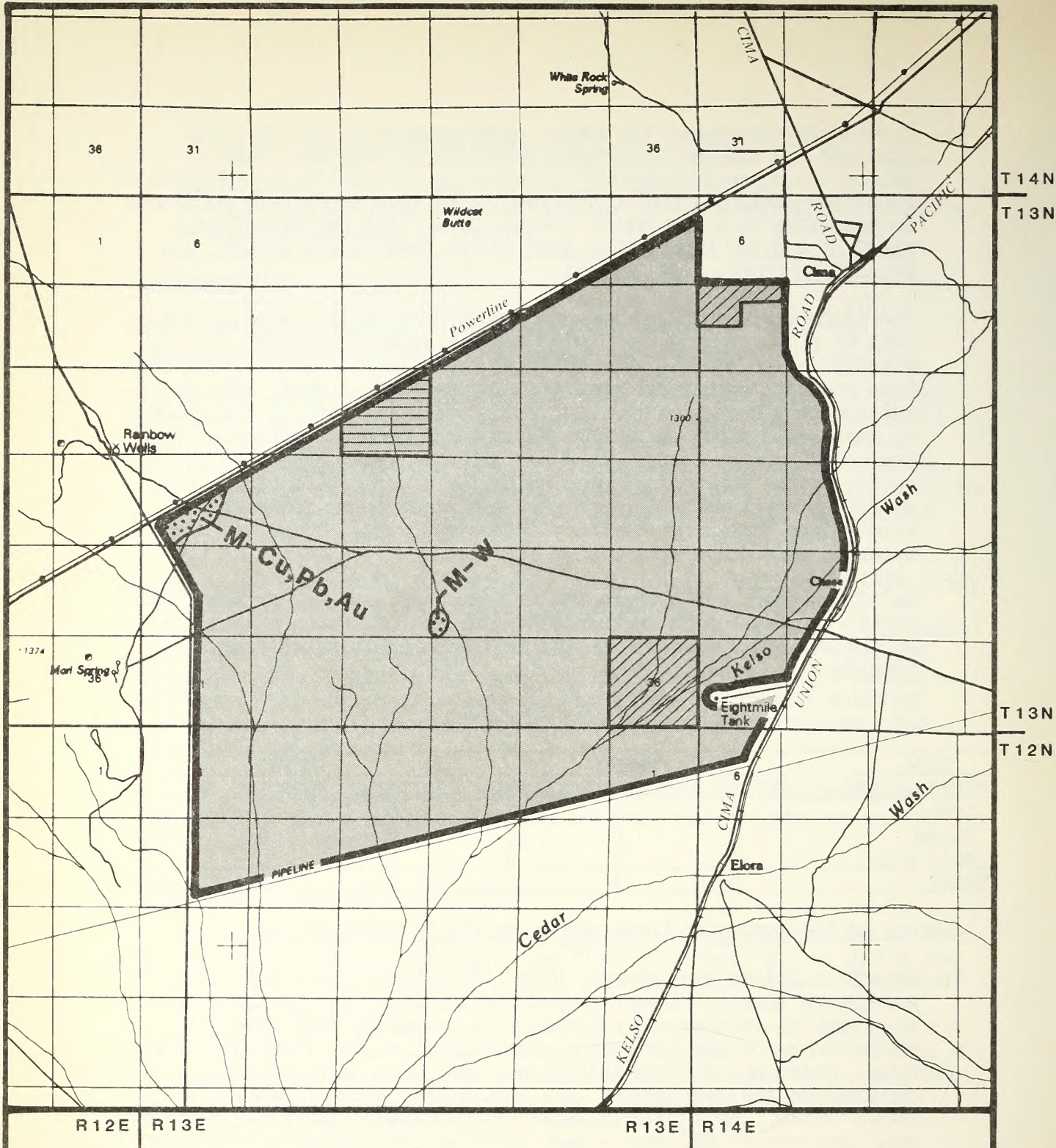
As of December, 1987, there was no expressed interest or plans for mining or exploration in this WSA. Unpatented mining claims located in the WSA are summarized in the following table taken from BLM records dated February 1988.

Table 4 - Mineral Interest

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	0	1	1	0	20	20
Placer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mill Site	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1	1	0	20	20

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Under low intensity multiple use management there will be no immediate impact. Over the long term, existing naturalness and solitude will gradually decline with projected gradually increasing off-highway vehicle (OHV) use of the area. Noise and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development will result in a gradual decline in these values. This adverse impact is considered minor since OHV use, exploration and development would be constrained by existing management guidelines.
2. Impact on Joshua Tree Woodland Unusual Plant Assemblage: The proposed action will have a minor adverse impact as a result of surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development. Monitoring and patrol efforts and mitigation measures to be stipulated as part of any authorized resource development activities will assure that sensitive species receive adequate protection.



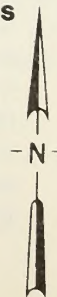
- | | |
|--|---|
| | Recommended for Wilderness |
| | Recommended for Non Wilderness |
| | Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness |
| | Split Estate |
| | State |
| | Private |

Explanation

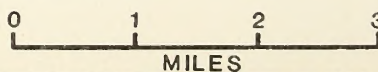
- | | |
|----------|--|
| | High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| | Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| M | Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area |
| H | High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area |

Commodity Symbols

- | | |
|-----------|----------|
| Au | Gold |
| Cu | Copper |
| Pb | Lead |
| W | Tungsten |



Eight-Mile Tank Mineral Resource Potential



MAP-2
CDCA-245

3. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available. However, mining activities would be restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines outlined in the CDCA and EMNSA Plans which limit vehicle access and mitigate adverse effects on sensitive resource values. This impact is expected to be minor due to the lack of interest in the area. No claims are currently on file with the Bureau.
4. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the EMNSA Plan. This use is primarily restricted to the eight miles of the Mojave Road and one other primitive route in the center of the study area due to the rough terrain which prohibits OHV use throughout most of the WSA.
5. Impact on Desert Tortoise Habitat: The proposed action will result in a minor adverse impact caused by human intrusion as a result of uses associated primarily with OHV access along the Mojave Road. Management guidelines as outlined in the EMNSA and CDCA Plans as well as enforcement of State laws will protect this species and their habitat.
6. Impact on Expansion of Regional Energy/Utility Transmission Corridors: Constraints will exist on expansion of these facilities independent of wilderness issues. An amendment to the CDCA and EMNSA Plans is required prior to any authorization to expand facilities within the area identified by the State as an energy/transmission utility corridors.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: The majority of comments supported the findings.
2. Study Phase: Fourteen comments were received on this WSA. Seven favored wilderness designation, six opposed it and one wanted to give special designation to the unique geologic features but was not sure that wilderness was the best solution. Wilderness proponents saw the area as an integral part of the Cima Dome area and suggested that it should be combined with adjacent polygons to

form a large Cima Dome Wilderness Area. The Joshua tree stands in the northern portion were said to be the thickest part of the Cima Dome Joshua tree forest. A feeling of solitude was provided by the screening of this vegetation, by the topography and by the sheer size of the study area. Also present were outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, such as hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, photography and nature study.

Several respondents noted that the Old Government Road was not confining to visitors, as suggested by an earlier wilderness inventory narrative. They said the road was an attractive feature and provided a good hiking and riding route. A suggestion was made to make an exclusive grazing lease road system to allow grazing to continue while protecting wilderness resources.

Wilderness opponents wanted the Old Government Road left available for vehicle use. Features which detract from the area's wilderness quality included telephone and power lines to the northwest which destroy sunset vistas, railroad and aircraft noise, mining operations and the visibility to the east of Kelso night lights. One business was concerned that the potential for oil, gas, and geothermal resources might not be recognized.

One letter was received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). It favored moving the eastern boundary several miles away from the paved Cima Road and the railroad tracks.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were few comments specific to this WSA. This was one of those WSA's opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and OHV groups. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting a multiple use classification of moderate use for this area. This was in agreement with the recommendation of the Use Alternative. Conservation groups members preferred either the Balanced Alternative, which recommended limited use or the Protection Alternative which recommended controlled use or wilderness.
4. Proposed Plan: Conservation groups asked specifically for stronger management for the Cima Dome area than that offered by the Plan's proposed National Natural Landmark designation. Organizations such as NOC maintained the same position as for the Draft Plan Alternatives.

No comments were received from local governments.

Kelso Mountains

CDCA 249

KELSO MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-249)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 79,108 acres

The Kelso Mountains WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest communities are Baker, California, 20 road miles northwest; Twentynine Palms, California, 110 road miles south; and Las Vegas, Nevada, 120 road miles northeast. The WSA includes 74,992 acres of public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 3,599 acres of lands belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totaling approximately 517 acres. No split-estate land exists within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 and Table 1).

Beginning at the railroad siding of Kelso in the southeastern corner of the study area, the WSA's eastern boundary follows Kelbaker Road north for ten miles. At the intersection of the transmission line road, the northern boundary follows the southern edge of the transmission line right-of-way heading southwest for ten miles excluding the road and communication site located in Section 26, T. 12 N., R.11 E. The northern boundary then leaves the powerline road and follows a graded dirt road for three and one-half miles leading to the railroad siding of Sands. At this point, the southern boundary follows the Union Pacific Railroad line heading southeast for 16 miles until it reaches Kelso.

The WSA is completely within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA), designated in 1980 by the Secretary of the Interior in conjunction with approval of the California Desert Plan. The study area contains 60% hills and mountains and 40% sand-covered plains. The most prominent structural feature in the WSA is the Kelso Mountains, a massive linear range which covers some 50 square miles of the WSA. Kelso Peak is the highest point, extending some 4,784 feet above sea level. West of the Kelso Mountains lies the southernmost extension of the Old Dad Mountains. Here, the terrain is steep and rocky. The dark volcanic rock formations contrast with the stark ivory sands encompassing the adjacent Devil's Playground area. The gently sloping surface of the sand-blanketed Devil's Playground covers some 35 square miles along the southern and eastern portion of the WSA.

Throughout the WSA, vegetation is predominantly creosote bush scrub on the rocky soils and desert psammophytic scrub on the sand dunes. The desert psammophytic scrub association includes creosote bush and white bur sage as well as plants that are restricted to sand dunes. Indian ricegrass, dune panic grass, big galleta, spike dropseed, and sand dropseed are common perennial grasses in this association and are often the dominant vegetation. Common perennial and annual forbs include desert-lily, rattleweed, prickly-poppy, sand verbena and dune evening primrose. Sand plant and broom-rape, two uncommon root parasites, can be found in the dunes. Scattered thickets of mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa* var. *torreyana*) occur on sand hummocks in the Devil's Playground and are considered an Unusual Plant Assemblage (UPA) in the CDCA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 0 acres recommended for wilderness
74,992 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The nonsuitable recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the area does not possess any unique or outstanding features that are not represented in areas either already part of, or recommended for inclusion within the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS); (2) the area's value as wilderness is overshadowed by its potential for motorized recreation and mining; (3) the area's special features can be protected without wilderness designation, under existing management guidelines; and (4) wilderness designation has the potential to conflict with future energy transmission needs.

The WSA is typical of the desert environments within the transition zone between the Great Basin and Mojave Deserts. A more extensive and diverse representation of the region's ecologic and geographic features is found within other CDCA study areas recommended for wilderness designation, including the Kelso Dunes (CDCA-250) located adjacent to this WSA's southern boundary, the North Providence Mountains (CDCA-263) located two miles southeast and the Granite Mountains (CDCA-256) located six miles south of the Kelso Mountains WSA. There are approximately 25 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

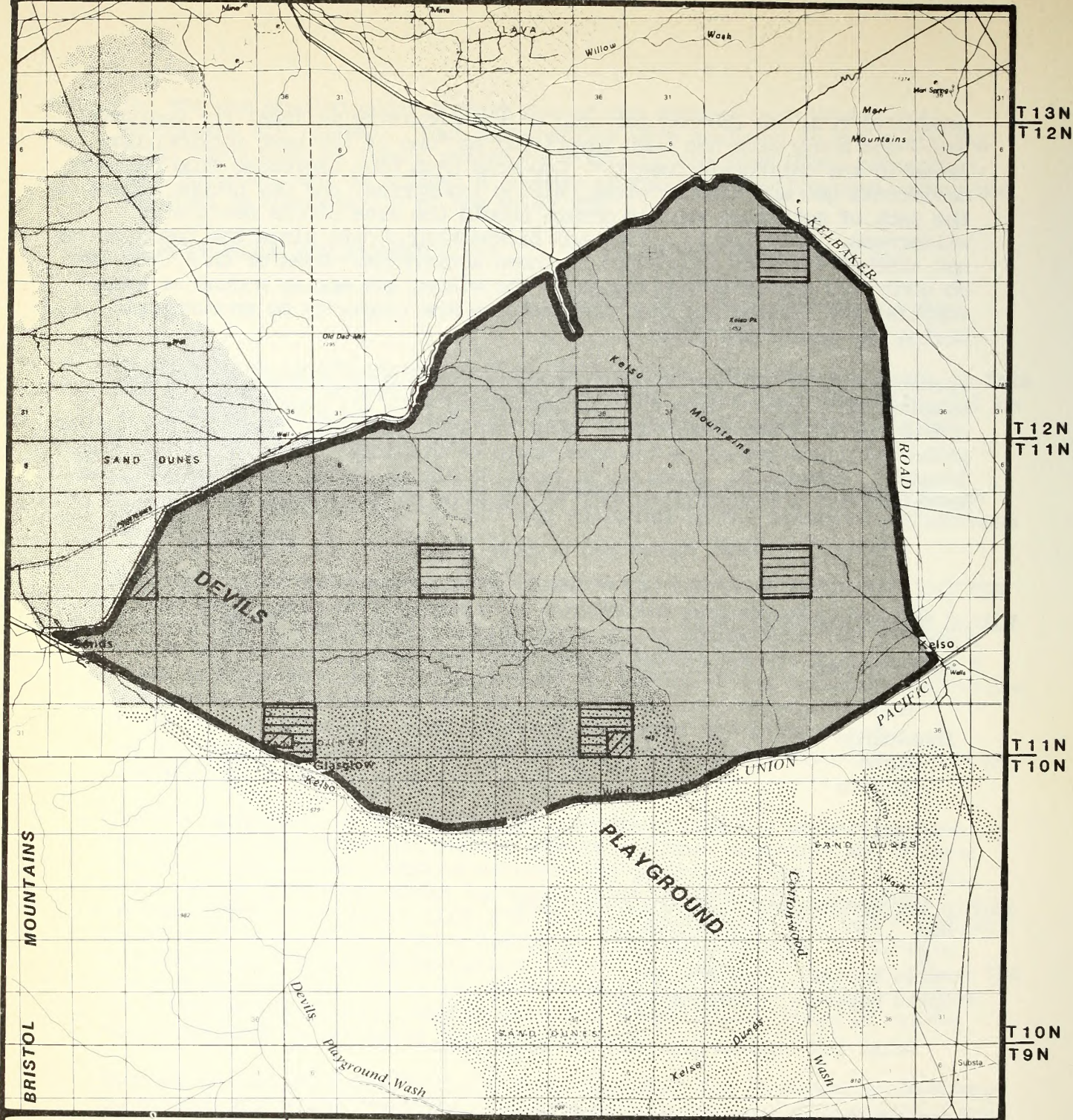
Current recreation use within the Kelso Mountains WSA is almost exclusively motorized, and would therefore be displaced by wilderness designation. Use is estimated at 1000 visitor-use days annually with the predominant activity being rockhounding and off-highway vehicle (OHV) touring, which primarily takes place in the Devil's Playground located in the southern and western portions of the study area and extending outside of the WSA into the Razor Off-Highway Vehicle Open Area. The abandoned route of the Tonapah and Tidewater railroad, now a motorized vehicle route, traverses the Devil's Playground in a north-south direction adjacent to the west boundary of the study area. Although portions of the route are closed to motorized vehicle use, this area receives an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 visitors during holiday weekends with some use spilling over into the WSA. Most recreation use is

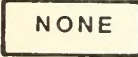

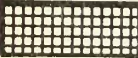
generated from the Los Angeles area as the proximity is ideal for weekend use. The study area has been identified as "one of the best rockhounding areas in the California Desert." Concerns have been expressed from numerous California gem and mineral clubs, mining industries, and OHV groups regarding the lack of motorized vehicle access should the area become designated wilderness. Very little hiking and backpacking occurs since the resources do not attract visitors interested in these activities. Uses of this type that do occur are generally restricted to the winter and spring months as water supplies are limited and high temperatures are likely to be encountered during the summer and fall.


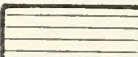

Portions of the WSA have moderate potential for gold, copper, limestone, uranium, thorium and iron and are encumbered with 131 unpatented mining claims. Wilderness designation would conflict with full development of these potential resources since the area would be withdrawn from mineral entry and leasing. Conversely, since valid existing mining claims could be developed, this activity would conflict with maintenance of wilderness values.

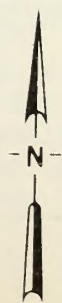
TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	74,992
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		3,599
Private		517
Total		<u>79,108</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	74,992
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>74,992</u>

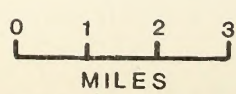


- | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|
|  | NONE | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS | |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS | |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
|  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | STATE |
|  | PRIVATE |



**Kelso Mountains
Proposal
MAP-1**



CDCA-249
JUNE, 1988

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Several manmade features detract from the naturalness of this WSA. A well-traveled route bisects the WSA from the north powerline boundary between the Old Dad and Kelso Mountains and runs in a north-south direction to Kelbaker Road on the eastern boundary. Other signs of man's presence include occasional mining claim markers and a loose network of old mining access routes encompassing approximately ten miles.
2. Solitude: Good opportunities for solitude are available from within the interior of the WSA. However, these opportunities are lessened as one moves closer to the perimeter areas because of the outside sounds from trains passing along the Union Pacific Railroad which forms the southern boundary and from highway noise along Kelbaker Road.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Although the WSA does provide opportunities for a primitive recreational experience, it does not contain any features to attract this type of visitor use.
4. Special Features: Found within the WSA is a large portion of the range for the Kelso-Old Dad Mountains desert bighorn sheep herd which currently numbers approximately 200 animals. Two bighorn sheep guzzlers within the WSA provide permanent water for this herd. The desert bighorn sheep is a BLM sensitive species in the State of California.

The Kelso Mountains offer above average nesting and foraging habitat for raptors such as golden eagles (at least two aeries are known to exist on Kelso Peak), prairie falcons, red-tailed hawks, American kestrels, and other raptors as well as several species of owls. Over 8,000 acres of desert tortoise habitat exists within the WSA with population densities of 50 to 100 individuals per square mile. The desert tortoise is a BLM Sensitive species in California and is also a candidate for listing as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

No State- or Federally-listed rare, threatened or endangered species of wildlife are known to occur in the WSA. However, as previously discussed, the WSA does contain an UPA.

Currently, 40 acres along the western slope of the Old Dad Mountains are formally withdrawn from mineral entry for protection of sensitive cultural resources.

The Kelso and Old Dad Mountains are an area of mythological importance to the Chemehuevi. One major trading route can be traced from Kelso Dunes northwest to salt collection areas used by the Chemehuevi.

Chemehuevi groups visited the sand blanketed Devil's Playground area in the spring to harvest the seed of various bunch grasses. This prehistoric activity is evidenced by the presence of widely distributed milling stations in the Kelso Dunes/Devil's Playground vicinity.

An airstrip of the World War II era is located in the study area. Artifacts and features associated with this site are of interest to historians and archaeologists.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 74,992 acres of the American Desert/Creosote bush (Larrea) ecosystem. This ecosystem is widespread in the California Desert and is represented within the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,192,917
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,579,113

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Arizona</u>				
Phoenix	40	1,758,456	118	4,449,908
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 13 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 120 miles south of the Kelso Mountains WSA.

C. Manageability

The Kelso Mountains WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, manageability would be complicated by several factors. Flat sandy terrain near the western boundary along with numerous ways and washes penetrate the WSA boundaries. Extensive four-wheel drive activity takes place in the Razor Open Area and some spill-off occurs in the WSA. The WSA's proximity to the Los Angeles basin does complicate management as recreationists have had a long history of vehicle related use of the area. Long-term use patterns may be difficult to turn around. Management as wilderness would require a significant commitment to ensure the integrity of the area.

Presently, two bighorn sheep guzzlers are located within the WSA. Maintenance of these guzzlers is required approximately two times per year, and normally requires mechanized equipment and vehicles for transportation of materials to the site.

Because many of the WSA's 131 mining claims are within the zone predicted to have moderate potential for gold, copper, iron and limestone, it is likely that at least a portion of the claims would withstand a validity examination. Unless the United States can acquire the valid mineral rights, those claims can be developed, which would negatively impact maintenance of wilderness values.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Kelso Mountains WSA is located in the BLM Old Dad Mountains Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The 1980 G-E-M resource data in the wilderness section of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) for this WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated and interpreted during the recommendation process. G-E-M data in the EIS did state that the WSA had a potential for uranium, copper, iron and other metals. As of December, 1979 there were fifteen unpatented mining claims recorded with the BLM in the WSA.

Mineral resource file data for the Old Dad Mountains GRA was not available for review during this summary but a G-E-M report by Charles Sabine (1980) was available. This report incorporated the available published literature at the time.

According to the G-E-M evaluation report, an iron deposit occurs in the northwestern and southeastern portions of the WSA. These iron deposits are similar to the Old Dad Mine that is found three miles north of the boundary of the Old Dad Mountain WSA (CDCA-243) and occur as massive iron lenses averaging 50 feet to 200 feet wide and up to 600 feet long. Copper and gold are associated with the iron in fractured limestone or quartzite. There is no reported production from any of these iron, copper and/or gold occurrences.

In the G-E-M report two areas are classified as having occurrence potential for uranium. One area is in early Precambrian rocks located in the east-central part of the WSA. This area occurs between two faults, and exhibits a positive gamma-ray anomaly associated with uranium, thorium and potassium.

Favorable geologic environment and anomalous geochemical signatures for uranium identified in the 1980 G-E-M report strongly suggests the possibility of uranium-thorium bearing pegmatites. Under the BLM classification system, the area in the southwestern portion of the WSA is given a moderate occurrence potential for these minerals.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No U.S. Geological (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys were conducted in this WSA because it is recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation.

A study of the East Mojave Scenic Area, which included this WSA, was made by the BLM. This study compiled data collected and analyzed by the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) for their nonurban land mineral assessment. The findings in this study were published as BLM report (Evans, J.R., (1986,)), Mineral Impact Study of a 2,000 Square Mile Area of the East Mojave Desert, San Bernardino County California. In this study, the BLM followed the CDMG Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) classification scheme with respect to the presence, absence, or likely occurrence of mineral deposits. The report by Evans showed that 95% of the Kelso Mountains was classified as having unknown mineral potential for mineral resources.

The areas classified by the CDMG with mineral occurrence potential in this WSA are shown on Map 2 classified under the BLM system. These areas with mineral occurrence potential correspond to those areas that were discussed in the G-E-M report. In the southeast corner of the WSA, four gold and/or copper prospects occur in a three square mile area associated with Paleozoic sediments, including limestone that are in fault contact with an early Precambrian metamorphic complex. The area surrounding these prospects is shown on Map 2 as having a moderate occurrence potential for copper and gold and within that zone are localized places that include moderate potential areas for the occurrence of silica, copper and gold.

There are two other small areas with a moderate occurrence potential for iron and limestone within this WSA at the south end of the Old Dad Mountains in the northwestern portion of the WSA. One of the limestone areas is one and one-half miles from the mid-northern border and the other potential area is adjacent to the boundary.

There was no expressed interest or plans filed with the BLM this WSA. As of December, 1987 there were six lode claims and 125 placer claims recorded with the BLM in this WSA. All of the placer claims except two are located in the western one-third of the WSA, on the sand dunes and sandy alluvium of an area referred to as the Devil's Playground. Four lode claims are located in the Old Dad Mountains near the north boundary of the WSA. The remaining two lode claims are found in the northeast corner of the WSA, north of Kelso Peak.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE MINING CLAIM	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	N/A	6	6	N/A	120	120
Placer	N/A	125	125	N/A	5,000	5,000
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	131	131	N/A	5,120	5,120

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values will decline over the long term as exploration and development occurs in areas of moderate mineral potential, and in areas used for OHV recreation. Wilderness values will be retained in the portions of the WSA not subjected to these uses.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: The proposed action will have no impact. Further exploration, as well as development of the 131 existing claims can proceed subject to a plan of operations and regulations contained within 43 CFR 3809.
3. Impact on Sensitive Wildlife Species: Future planned actions will be subject to environmental analysis to identify any potential impacts to desert tortoise or bighorn sheep, allowing development and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.
4. Impact on the Unusual Plant Assemblage: The UPA will continue to be managed in accordance with the CDCA Plan, requiring special consideration in environmental analyses to avoid or minimize impacts, and development of rehabilitation measures where impacts are unavoidable.
5. Impact on Native American Uses and Values: Native American access to traditional hunting areas and collection sites will be retained.
6. Impact on Archeological Resources: All proposed surface disturbing activities will be subjected to environmental analysis to allow the detection and salvage of any resources.
7. Impact on Regional Energy Transmission: Constraints will exist on expansion of these facilities independent of wilderness issues. An amendment to the CDCA and EMNSA Plans is required prior to any authorization to expand facilities within the area identified by the State as an energy/transmission utility corridor.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Most comments were supportive of the findings. Some mentioned features which might interfere with opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Three noted the microwave station on the Kelso mountain which had already been excluded from the WSA boundary.
2. Study Phase: Twenty-one letters were received on WSA this. Thirteen favored wilderness designation, while eight opposed it. Several respondents noted the contiguity of WSA this with the Devil's Playground on the north (WSA 243) and wanted to combine both wilderness units into one large Devil's Playground Wilderness Area. Features which were mentioned as special and in the need of protection were the petroglyphs southeast of Old Dad Mountain (this area is currently under a formal mineral withdrawal); three species of rare plants, including Limestone penstemon and Mojave grama; yuccas, cacti, the desert tortoise, and rare insects. The WSA provides fine opportunities for solitude through its varied and rugged landforms. The combination of dunes, rugged hills, rock outcroppings, lava formations, and desert pavement provide excellent scenery and possibilities for primitive recreation such as hiking, backpacking, photography, camping, and nature study.

Opponents of wilderness noted sights and sounds which could interfere with wilderness quality. These included: the Old Kelbaker road, a transmission line, a railroad, mines and quarries, water tanks, windmills, a fence, and a microwave station (already excluded from the WSA). An oil company mentioned the potential for oil, gas and geothermal resources in this area. One letter stated that this is one of the desert's finest rock collecting areas. The remnants of off-highway vehicle competitive events under the Interim Critical Management Plan was also pointed out.

Two comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/25/79). Both favored maintaining existing use. The railroad and existing dirt roads were said to eliminate this area's wilderness potential. One writer wanted more area open to off-highway vehicles.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were few comments specific to WSA 249 in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this was one of the many WSAs opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle organizations. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting multiple use classification of moderate use for

this area. This was in agreement with the recommendation of the Use Alternative. Conservation group members preferred either the Balanced Alternative, which recommended limited use or the Protection Alternatives which recommended controlled use, or wilderness. One respondent stated that exploration for and development of oil, gas, and geothermal resources under the No Action Alternative would be the best uses for the study area.

4. Proposed Plan: There were few specific comments on this WSA in response to the Proposed Plan which recommended a classification of limited use for this unit. This classification was satisfactory for most of the conservation groups but was opposed by vehicle-oriented groups which wanted more access to the area.

No comments were received from local governments.

Kelso Dunes

CDCA 250

KELSO SAND DUNES WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-250)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

208,158 acres

The Kelso Sand Dunes WSA is located in San Bernardino County, near the center of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The eastern third of the WSA is within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA). The nearest communities are Baker, 50 miles north; Barstow, 95 miles west; and Twentynine Palms, 70 miles southwest. The study area contains 156,422 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 9,296 acres of State land, and private land totalling 42,440 acres. (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The Union Pacific Railroad track forms the north WSA boundary from near the Balch siding on the west to Kelso on the east. From the northeast corner near Kelso, the east boundary follows the telephone line, traversing a section of private property at the north end and a State section at the south end. The south boundary follows a graded dirt road for about four miles until it meets a gas pipeline and maintenance road, which forms the remainder of the south boundary. The southwest corner of the WSA is two miles north of the Interstate 40 Ludlow exit. The west WSA boundary follows Crucero Road north through the Broadwell Dry Lake, and then follows a utility right-of-way containing telephone transmission lines to the northwest corner (see Map 1).

This large WSA contains a variety of landforms. The Kelso Dunes, the second tallest dunes in the California Desert and a BLM Outstanding Natural Area, are located within its borders, as well as two sweeping valleys and the rolling Bristol Mountains. The WSA contains 30% hills, 30% alluvial fans, 20% sand dunes, 5% dissected fans, 5% mountains, 3% sand-covered plains, 3% sand-covered fans, 2% highly dissected fans, and 2% river washes.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

49,065	acres recommended for wilderness
110,017	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

Twenty-three percent partial wilderness is the recommendation for the Kelso Sand Dunes WSA, in accordance with the 1982 CDCA Plan amendment. The 110,017 acres in this WSA recommended nonsuitable are released for uses other than wilderness. In addition to the Federal acreage recommended for wilderness, BLM recommends that 2,619 acres of State land and 41 acres of private land be acquired through exchange or purchase and designated as

wilderness. With acquisition of these inholdings, a total of 49,065 acres are recommended for wilderness. Appendix 1 lists all inholdings and provides additional information on their acquisition. The remaining 110,017 acres of public lands are released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The balanced alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative, as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The partial wilderness designation is based on the following rationale: (1) the lands recommended for wilderness designation possess an outstanding primitive character; (2) the recommended wilderness area encompasses the bulk of the Kelso Sand Dunes themselves, which are a unique addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System and the most scenic portion of the WSA; and (3) the partial wilderness recommendation is consistent with previous management actions and will result in the most manageable wilderness boundary.

The lands recommended for wilderness designation possess a primitive character exemplifying the qualities described in the definition of wilderness contained in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964. Within the recommended wilderness area, the "earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man," and "man himself is a visitor who does not remain." The dunes retain their "primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation." Opportunities for hiking, exploring, nature study, research, and photography are available, limited only by the stamina of the visitor. The suitability recommendation will preclude any further vehicular use of approximately 14 miles of primitive access routes of travel.

The Kelso Sand Dunes are a unique ecosystem exhibiting great species diversity. They provide habitat for a specialized group of plants and animals, many of which are indigenous to this area and occur nowhere else. Rising to heights of over 600 feet above the desert floor, the visually spectacular Kelso Dunes are one of the three tallest dune systems in North America.

The importance of protecting the dunes and their unique flora and fauna was identified by BLM even before the wilderness review mandated by FLPMA. In recognition of their special values, a portion of the Kelso Dunes were included in the Eastern Mojave National Recreation Lands designation. The dunes have also been recognized as an Outstanding Natural Area and were withdrawn from mineral entry in 1972 to protect public and recreational values. The portion of this WSA recommended for wilderness is the entire portion of the WSA within the congressionally designated East Mojave National Scenic Area.

Prior to 1973, the Kelso Dunes supported off-highway vehicle recreation. Since 1973, the dunes have been closed to all recreational vehicle use. Because the closed area boundary is synonymous with the recommended wilderness boundary, wilderness designation will have no new impacts on motorized recreation.

There is nothing unique about the portion of the WSA recommended for nonwilderness. The landforms and ecosystem here are similar to many other areas recommended for wilderness designation. In addition, this area is managed for off-highway vehicle use on existing routes, and contains about 35 miles of primitive ways which will remain available for vehicular use. The recommended nonwilderness portion of the WSA also has higher mineral potential than the area recommended for wilderness, and a higher percentage of non-Federal inholdings.

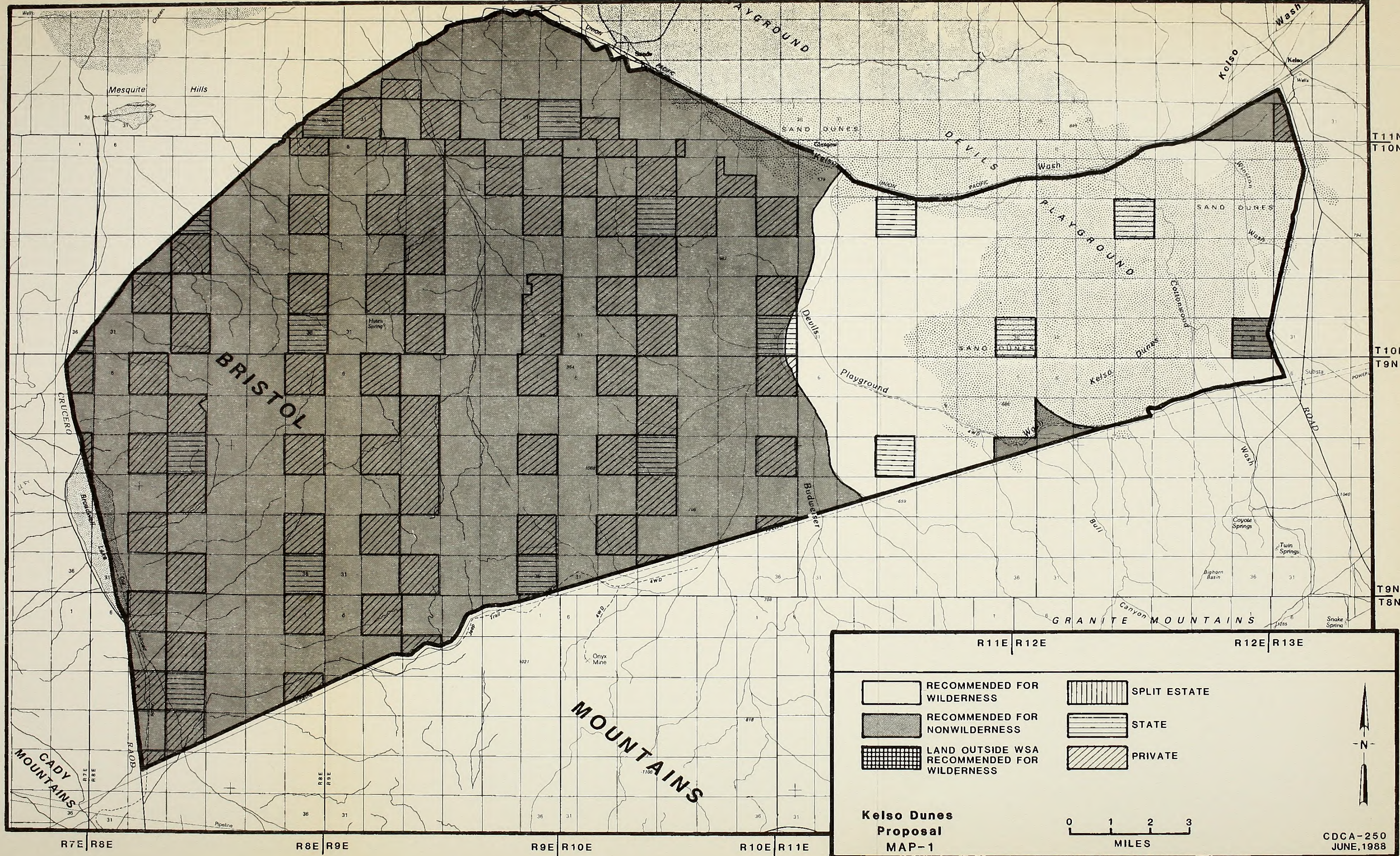


TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	156,422
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		9,296
Private		42,440
Total		<u>208,158</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	46,405
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>46,405</u>
Inholdings ¹		
State		2,619
Private		41
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	110,017
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>110,017</u>

¹ Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The only signs of man within the portion of the WSA recommended for wilderness are posts, monuments and other minor disturbances associated with mining claim location and annual assessment work, primarily on claims predating WSA status. This portion of the WSA is closed to motor vehicles, and since it is an area of actively shifting sands, evidence of previous vehicle use has been obliterated. The portion of the WSA recommended for nonwilderness is an area where vehicle use is allowed on existing routes. Within the portion of the WSA recommended for nonwilderness are approximately 35 miles of primitive vehicle ways, most of which leave Crucero Road on the WSA's west boundary and extend eastward to the edge of the Bristol Mountains.
2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude, although available, are somewhat constrained by intrusions from sights and sounds outside the WSA: railroad trains, a paved road with its traffic, a gas compressor station, and a mining operation. At present, human use of the area is moderate and visitor use tends to occur in a very small area of the dunes. Greater opportunities for solitude await the visitor willing to venture from this area into less well-known sections of the WSA.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The recommended wilderness portion of the WSA has high potential for hiking, photography, research, nature study and other primitive and unconfined recreational activities. While the recommended nonwilderness portion of the WSA also presents ample opportunities for primitive recreation, there are relatively few special features in this area to add to the quality of the experience.
4. Special Features: Reaching a height of approximately 600 feet, the Kelso Dunes are one of the three tallest dune systems in continental North America, rivaled only by the Eureka Dunes in California and the Great Sand Dunes, a National Monument in southern Colorado. The WSA contains examples of many dune types, including star, transverse, longitudinal, sief, and barchan dunes. The Kelso Dunes are the southernmost extension of a sea of sand known as the Devil's Playground, a place that is still a blank area on most maps.

Some dunes "sing" or "boom." The deep bass boom of a great sand dune is an eerie occurrence especially to the unsuspecting dune climber who may unwittingly trigger this phenomenon by breaking a dune crest and sending masses of sand down the lee slopes. Quartz grains of sand when set into motion rub against other grains and set off oscillations which produce an unimaginably deep and pure tone. The physics of Kelso's booming are not fully understood. However, research has shown that booming dunes possess sand grains which are smoother and more polished than their non-booming counterparts.

Almost a hundred species of plants grow upon the Kelso Dunes--grasses, shrubs, and a profusion of showy spring wild flowers, the most conspicuous of which are pink sand verbenas and white dune primroses. The plant life on these dunes is not only interesting and varied, but much of it is indigenous to the dunes. The CDCA Plan designated the Kelso Dunes as an Unusual Plant Assemblage.

Nine species of insects are endemic to the Kelso Dunes. These species were proposed for listing on the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife with the Kelso Dunes proposed as Critical Habitat. The Kelso Dunes are one of the few protected habitats for the Mohave fringe-toed lizard, a species restricted to areas of fine, wind-blown sand. Due to the size and stabilized nature of this dune system, populations of this lizard are presently in excellent condition. The desert tortoise, a BLM sensitive species in California, also inhabits the dunes. A group of endemic weevils at Kelso Dunes are relics of an ancient insect fauna which once had a much wider distribution in what is now the California desert.

Few archaeological sites have been recorded in the WSA and no known historic resources or Native American concerns exist within the area. However, the lack of cultural resources may be due to the limited amount of inventory completed there. The five known sites within the WSA are remotely located near natural tanks and springs, and are inaccessible to vehicles. An example of prehistoric rock art exists in the Bristol Mountain portion of the WSA which probably cannot be reached by vehicle at this time. The Chemehuevi-Serrano ethnographic boundary runs through the extreme western portion of the WSA which may indicate use of the area by both ethnic groups.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System
(NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 156,422 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. The Kelso Sand Dunes are a unique ecosystem and provide habitat for a specialized group of plants and animals, many of which are indigenous to this area and occur nowhere else. Designation of the suitable portion of the WSA as wilderness will add to the diversity of the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,111,487
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,497,683

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of eight major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of wilderness areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of these population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The nearest designated wilderness area is in the Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, located some 80 miles southwest of the Kelso Dunes WSA. Three BLM study areas recommended for wilderness designation are close to the Kelso Dunes WSA. The North Providence Mountains WSA 263 is within two miles of the Kelso Dunes. South Providence Mountains WSA 262 is immediately adjacent to the Dunes, and a powerline maintenance road separates

WSA 250 from WSA 256, Granite Mountains. In addition, five other BLM study areas recommended for wilderness designation are within 50 air miles of the Kelso Sand Dunes WSA.

C. Manageability

The Kelso Sand Dunes WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, there is a significant difference in ease of manageability between the portion recommended for wilderness and the portion recommended for nonwilderness.

The recommended wilderness portion has been closed to motor vehicles since 1973. Off-highway vehicle recreationists are already familiar with these posted boundaries. Manageability is further enhanced because the north, east, and south boundaries are clearly defined by physical features. (Although the west boundary of the recommended wilderness area is defined by Budweiser Wash, this boundary is somewhat impractical because the wash is shifting).

In contrast, the portion of the WSA recommended for nonwilderness would be difficult to manage as wilderness because motorized recreation use patterns are firmly established. Although the boundaries of the recommended nonwilderness area are also defined by physical features, this area is outside the existing closed area and contains 35 miles of primitive ways approved for vehicle use. Lack of topographic relief or other natural obstacles also facilitates vehicle use off these routes. The western, southern, and northern borders of this portion of the WSA may be difficult to defend against vehicular trespass as the adjacent terrain is flat or nearly so. In addition, this portion of the WSA contains much more extensive private inholdings than does the portion recommended for wilderness.

Within the portion of the WSA recommended for wilderness, manageability would be improved if the remaining non-Federal inholdings are acquired. Acquisition will assure that activities incompatible with wilderness management do not occur. Another factor affecting manageability is the large number of active mining claims (see Section D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values). Based on the mineral potential of the area, at least a portion of these claims would likely be found valid, allowing development to occur. Mineral development would preclude BLM's ability to maintain naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation at their existing levels.

A portion of one pre-FLPMA grazing lease exists within the Kelso Dunes WSA. Because grazing can continue following wilderness designation, management conflicts are not expected.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Kelso Dunes WSA is partially within the BLM Bristol/Granite Mountains and partially within the BLM Bristol Mountains Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Areas (GRAs). The 1980 mineral resources data had not been fully analyzed, integrated, and interpreted during the recommendation process for the WSA. The CDCA Plan EIS did state, however, that there was known potential and reserves for iron and gold throughout the Kelso Dunes, recommended suitable for wilderness designation, and potential for metals, uranium and perlite in the Bristol Mountains in the western part of the WSA. Bureau records show that there were 30 unpatented mining claims in the WSA as of December, 1979.

The recommended suitable eastern portion of the WSA is covered with aeolian sand deposits. According to the GRA file report, the sand dunes were classified as having a high occurrence potential for iron, which is found as a magnetic or heavy fraction in the sands. In addition, an area in the northwestern part of the WSA, consisting of at least five scattered gold and copper prospects in quartz veins in a Mesozoic granitic pluton, was classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold and copper. An area classified as having a moderate occurrence potential for gold, copper, manganese and iron, and an area classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold and tungsten were identified in the GRA file within the recommended nonsuitable north-central portion of the WSA. No production is known from the prospects in the area.

An area classified in the GRA as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of barite in Mesozoic volcanic rocks lies adjacent to the WSA border in the north-central portion of the WSA. The G-E-M report indicated that the barite vein is one to six feet wide and strikes north. No production is reported in the GRA file. In the mid-western part of the WSA (Bristol Mountains) a large area of Tertiary volcanic rock is classified as having a moderate occurrence potential for perlite. As in the Bristol/Granite Mountains WSA to the south, the perlite deposits occur in rhyolite breccia (locally part of brecciated rhyolitic domal features) in irregular to lens-like bodies that range in thickness from a few feet to 50 feet, and up to a 1,000 feet in maximum length. The approximate tonnage or number of occurrences is unknown and there has been no reported production from these perlite deposits in the GRA file.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: Between 1981 and 1984, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) conducted

mineral surveys of the portion of the WSA recommended suitable for wilderness designation which included the Kelso Dunes. The results of these surveys were published in 1984 in USGS Open File Report (OFR) 84-647.

The USGS/BOM survey outlined an area in the eastern part of the WSA, including all of the Kelso Dunes, with a high occurrence potential for silica and feldspar reserves, with by-product magnetite and gold. Also indicated is a low to moderate potential for undiscovered gold and copper resources in granitic rocks underlying the southeastern corner of the WSA. The area of high potential for silica/feldspar and iron is shown on Map 2. The low occurrence potential for undiscovered gold and copper is not shown, and the gold occurrence potential associated with the Kelso Dunes is also considered to be low.

According to the USGS/BOM OFR 84-647, seven claim groups totaling approximately 1,100 claims have been located within the suitable part of the WSA. Only two groups were active in 1982, totaling about 677 claims. These claims were located for iron in 1966 and 1967, and cover about 28,000 acres of the sand dune field. A dune sand processing plant, built in 1970 by Sandia Metals Company, produced about 1,000 tons of magnetite. There has been no activity at this site since the early 1970s; however, the present claimant is considering an operation at this site in the southeastern part of the WSA, and conferred with the BLM in January, 1988.

The uranium potential referred to in the CDCA Plan EIS was based on a correlation with potassium anomalies over an area of mainly granitic rock surrounded by Tertiary volcanics. There was no direct evidence of uranium occurrence, nor was there an airborne gamma-ray uranium anomaly within ten miles; therefore the occurrence potential for uranium is considered to be low.

The potential for oil and gas resources within the suitable part of this WSA is unknown but considered unlikely in the USGS/BOM open file report. Active oil and gas leases (1984) are located in the recommended suitable portion of the WSA. No oil and gas has been discovered in, or near, the study area as of January 1988.

The unpatented lode mining claims in the nonsuitable part are scattered throughout the west side and are associated mainly with perlite occurrences. Half of the unpatented placer mining claims in the recommended nonsuitable portion of the WSA are associated with perlite in the same area, but localized more in the northwestern part of the WSA, at the north end of Bristol Mountains. The other half of the placer claims in the nonsuitable part of the WSA are in the southeastern corner, adjacent to the Kelso Dunes. The greater

concentration of the unpatented placer mining claims are in the southeastern portion of the recommended suitable portion of the WSA along the WSA in the area classified as having a high occurrence potential for silica, feldspar, and iron. The following table summarizes active unpatented mining claims within the WSA recorded with BLM as of December 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

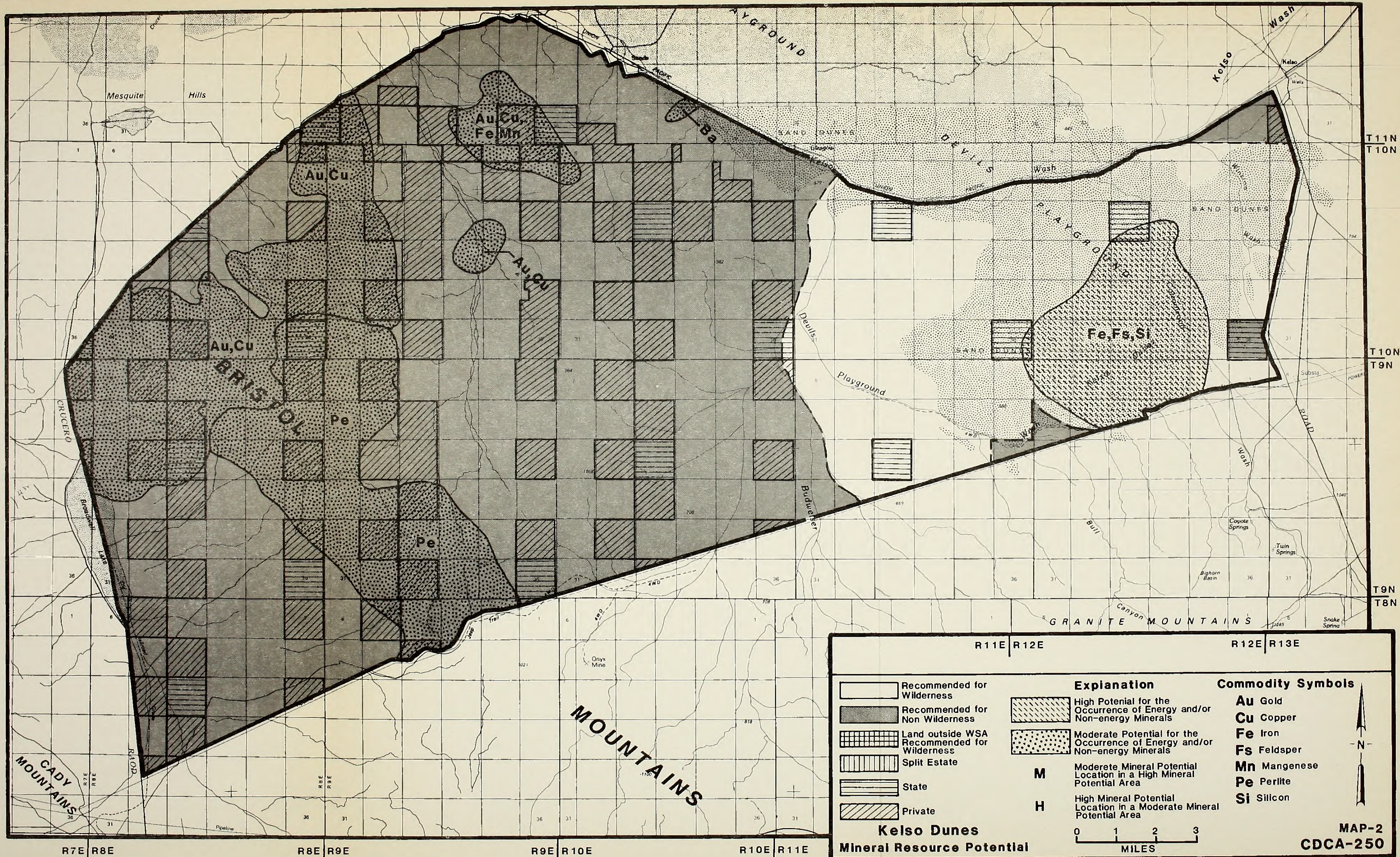
TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	0	22	22	0	440	440
Placer	692	22	714	27,680	880	28,560
Mill Site	0	33	33	0	165	165
Total	692	77	769	27,680	1,485	29,165

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values will be maintained on 29% of the WSA recommended for wilderness designation. Development of any mineral potential within the suitable portion of the WSA would have adverse impacts on wilderness values. On 71% of the WSA, naturalness will gradually decline over the long term from the cumulative effects of continuing OHV recreation and mineral exploration and development.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Development of existing claims will be subject to proof of a valid discovery. There will be no impact to existing opportunities for mineral exploration and development on 71% of the WSA. Exploration and development will be allowed to continue, subject to regulations stated in 43 CFR 3809 regarding surface disturbances, as well as any additional constraints stated in the CDCA Plan.
3. Impact on Unique Plant and Wildlife Species: The unique plant assemblage and wildlife species are located within the area recommended for wilderness. Therefore, their habitat will be protected to the maximum extent possible.
4. Impact on Motorized Recreation: Motorized recreation can continue in all locations where it is presently authorized.
5. Impact on Outstanding Natural Area: The Kelso Sand Dunes Outstanding Natural Area is fully within the recommended wilderness. Wilderness designation will provide permanent, legislative protection to the area's naturalness.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.



Explanation		Commodity Symbols
Recommended for Wilderness	High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals	Au Gold
Recommended for Non Wilderness	Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals	Cu Copper
Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness	M Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area	Fe Iron
Split Estate	H High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area	Fs Feldspar
State		Mn Manganese
Private		Pe Perlite
		Si Silicon

Kelso Dunes Mineral Resource Potential

0 1 2 3
MILES

MAP-2
CDCA-250

G. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Known inaccuracies are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Most of the public comments received regarding this area agreed with the findings on naturalness; however, many of these same respondents felt that the area was better suited to nonwilderness uses. There were also several comments which discussed in very general terms impacts which would degrade the natural condition. Reevaluation by the field team did not validate these latter comments.
2. Study Phase: Approximately 70 comments were received on this WSA. The majority opposed wilderness designation in favor of multiple use. Many felt the area's highest value was recreation and that vehicle access was essential for penetration of the area's interior. For example, Broadwell Mesa and Huyten Spring were excellent spots to visit but too remote for hikers. Certain locations used for educational purposes required vehicles for access. The Kelso Dunes and the Devil's Playground were in much demand as sites for motorized vehicle play. Rockhounding was also popular, particularly in the Bristol Mountain area, and long-time users wanted continued vehicle access.

Many opponents of wilderness status wanted to avoid closing the area to exploration for minerals, oil and gas, and geothermal resources. The Bristol Mountains were claimed to have uranium potential. Sight and sound intrusions into the area which should result in boundary adjustment included the railroad line, pumping and irrigation stations, and aircraft traffic. Depending on their multiple-use interest, some respondents recommended partial exclusions. Additional factors degrading the area's wilderness quality were the use of 5,158 acres for grazing and the intermingled private land in the western portion.

Although several respondents favored wilderness designation for the entire WSA, a greater number singled out the Kelso Dunes portion as the prime area which needed protection. They especially wanted to ban OHV use there. One respondent included an article he wrote explaining the "booming sand" quality of the dunes -- a "rare and almost mystical phenomenon," which requires freedom from noise pollution to experience. Other features of this portion of the WSA was the lack of intermingled private land the wildlife and vegetative resources, such as the Mojave fringe-toed lizard and rare grasses. Respondents who favored wilderness for the entire WSA were

enthusiastic about Broadwell Mesa, "the epitome of solitude in basalt," Hyten Spring, a pictoglyph area, the natural arch, and Broadwell Dry Lake. Opportunities abound for primitive recreation, and educational and scientific study and research.

Many comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook of 3/15/79. Southern California Gas Company requested that the WSA boundary be moved to at least 100 feet from the edge of their rights-of-way to provide adequate access for maintenance. Another response favored boundary changes to enhance wilderness. Wilderness proponents wished to restrict motorized vehicle use, while others disagreed with the withdrawal of public land. One expressed the need for access into the area for recreational purposes because of its size.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: A variety of public comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft CDCA Plan alternatives. The National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and OHV groups, agreed with none of the four alternatives, but proposed making the western portion of the WSA and a section of the Kelso Dunes open to OHV play and other intensive uses, and the rest of the eastern portion managed for moderate intensity multiple use. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons or letters supporting this position. Conservation oriented organizations and individuals expressed a variety of viewpoints, but most wanted the entire WSA recommended for wilderness designation. The Southern California Gas Company repeated its request for access for its rights-of-way.
4. Proposed Plan: There were campaigns by both the user and conservation groups to either keep the Kelso Dunes area which had been recommended for wilderness status open for recreational activity or closed for wilderness. A large number of comments were received for each view point.
5. 1982 Plan Amendments: Two proposals were made to change the suitability recommendations in two parts of the WSA. The first was to change the classification of one section in the northeast corner of the WSA (Section 35, T.11N., R.12E.) to moderate intensity multiple use. The rationale was that this would allow the proponent, a miner, to construct a mill site next to the railroad and utilities and would allow mining of the low adjacent dunes. This amendment was approved.

Of the 650 letters responding to the Draft EIS on the 1982 Plan Amendments, only 31 addressed this particular issue. Eight were in favor, and 23 were opposed. Those in favor included five organizations and the Planning Department of the County of San Bernardino. The reason given to back up this position was that mining takes up only a small percent of the public lands of the California Desert. Opponents of the proposal included 12 organizations. Reasons were that the new land classification will

allow increased impact on dune and sand wildlife and habitat, while increasing OHV enforcement problems. It was suggested that a better location for the mill site would be north of the railroad tracks, outside of the WSA.

The Final EIS on the 1982 Plan Amendments elicited only three responses in this proposal, one in favor and two opposed. The reasons given were identical to those listed for the Draft EIS.

The second amendment proposed for this WSA was to change the recommendation for portions on the north and west of the recommended wilderness area to low intensity multiple use. The west boundary change would remove about 5,000 acres of private land from the suitable portion of the WSA. The northern boundary adjustment would provide for a larger zone of land around the town of Kelso, free of wilderness restrictions. None of the spectacular dunes are in either area. A modification of this amendment was approved.

Forty-one letters responded to the Draft EIS on this proposal, eight in favor and 33 opposed. Proponents consisted of six organizations and two individuals; none provided any rationale. In addition, the Planning Department of the County of San Bernardino supported the land use change in the northern part of the WSA, suggesting that this adjustment be included with the other amendment described immediately above.

Opponents of the amendment included 12 organizations and two governmental agencies. The State of California Resources Agency opposed reducing the size of the area recommended for wilderness. They stated that the area contains some unusual sand hummocks and has scenic value. Increased use of the area could degrade wildlife habitat. The Planning Department of San Bernardino County, like several other respondents, suggested that the BLM should initiate a land exchange in the western portion of the WSA to protect its integrity and to allow owners of private lands to obtain lands elsewhere. One organization offered to help BLM and Southern Pacific, owner of most of the private land, in such a land exchange. Other opponents believed the change would adversely affect the low dunes which are prime habitat for the Mojave fringe-toed lizard and associated wildlife and plants.

In response to public input on the Draft EIS, the amendment was modified so that only the lands north of the dunes would be changed to low intensity multiple use. It was decided to explore the possibility of land exchange in the western portion of the WSA. The Final EIS on this modified amendment received only four comments, one in favor and three opposed. Opponents still felt that the low dunes would be impacted and wildlife habitat endangered.

APPENDIX 1
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION
KELSO DUNES WSA (CDCA-250)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION		
	TWN	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN		SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)	
												TOTAL ACREAGE
1	10N.	11E.	16	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
2	10N.	11E.	36	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
3	9N.	11E.	1	SBM	20	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	32.0	2.5
4	9N.	11E.	16	SBM	600	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
5	10N.	12E.	16	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
6	10N.	12E.	36	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0

These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.

Cady Mountains

CDCA 251

CADY MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-251)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 108,238 acres

The Cady Mountains WSA is located in San Bernardino County within the central portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The area is sandwiched between Interstates 40 and 15 approximately 35 miles east of Barstow. The WSA includes 77,015 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 3,093 acres owned by the State of California and 28,130 acres of private land (See Map 1 and Table 1).

The highly irregular northern border of the WSA resulted from an attempt to exclude contiguous blocks of private land. Section lines make up the western boundary and the southern boundary meanders along the base of the Cady Mountains, avoiding areas of existing surface disturbances. The southeastern boundary is along an imaginary line 400 feet north of three high tension powerlines which were in place in 1979, except where the service road extends beyond the 400 feet and then the service road is the boundary. A gravel road and the abandoned Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad grade forms the eastern boundary.

The WSA consists of the Cady Mountains which are a low, dark series of detached ridges and several intervening valleys. Washes which bisect the ridges are broad and contain wind-deposited sand. Elevations range from 1200 feet on the northeast bajada which is within the Mojave River Valley, to 4627 feet at the top of Cady Peak. Within the center of the WSA, and completely surrounded by the mountains, is the large, broad area known as Hidden Valley which is two to three miles wide and six miles long. The area contains the typical creosote bush scrub vegetative assemblage that exhibits some variability based upon elevation.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 0 acres recommended for wilderness 77,015 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Cady Mountains WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. Future activities in the WSA will be controlled by a combination of moderate and low intensity multiple use management as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The mosaic pattern of land ownership, existing impacts on private inholdings, the need to keep the land available for full development of a designated utility corridor, popularity of the area for rockhounding and motorized recreation, and mineral resource potentials are of greater significance than the area's value as wilderness. Designation of the area as wilderness would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Other WSAs in the California Desert that are recommended suitable offer a much more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values. There are approximately 46 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

The WSA is not manageable as wilderness. Approximately 30% of the WSA is non-public land which contains numerous permanent facilities, including routes of travel and a dirt air strip. The inholdings (minimum of 66 parcels) are scattered throughout the entire WSA, and several sections of public land (each 640 acres) along the western and northern border are not contiguous with the rest of the public land in the WSA. The public land in the eastern one-third of the area is also not contiguous with the rest of the WSA. The mosaic land ownership pattern essentially blocks the WSA into north-south strips of public land with many isolated east-west fingerlike extensions.

The Consolidated General Plan of San Bernardino County designates the area Rural Conservation. Zoning allows the parcels to be subdivided and/or utilized for residential, commercial, industrial or agricultural purposes. In addition, there is no existing access to many of the inholdings and some of them contained identified mineral values. The cost and effort of acquiring all of the private land to assure that wilderness values could be maintained would be forbidding.

Wilderness designation would prohibit full development of an energy and transmission corridor designated in the 1980 CDCA Plan and EIS. The two-mile wide corridor overlaps the southeastern boundary of the WSA for approximately one mile. This corridor, along with others in the CDCA, were designated to accommodate the long term energy and communication needs of the southwestern United States. Depending upon the juxtaposition of the WSAs ultimately designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may or may not be constraints to full development of such corridors.

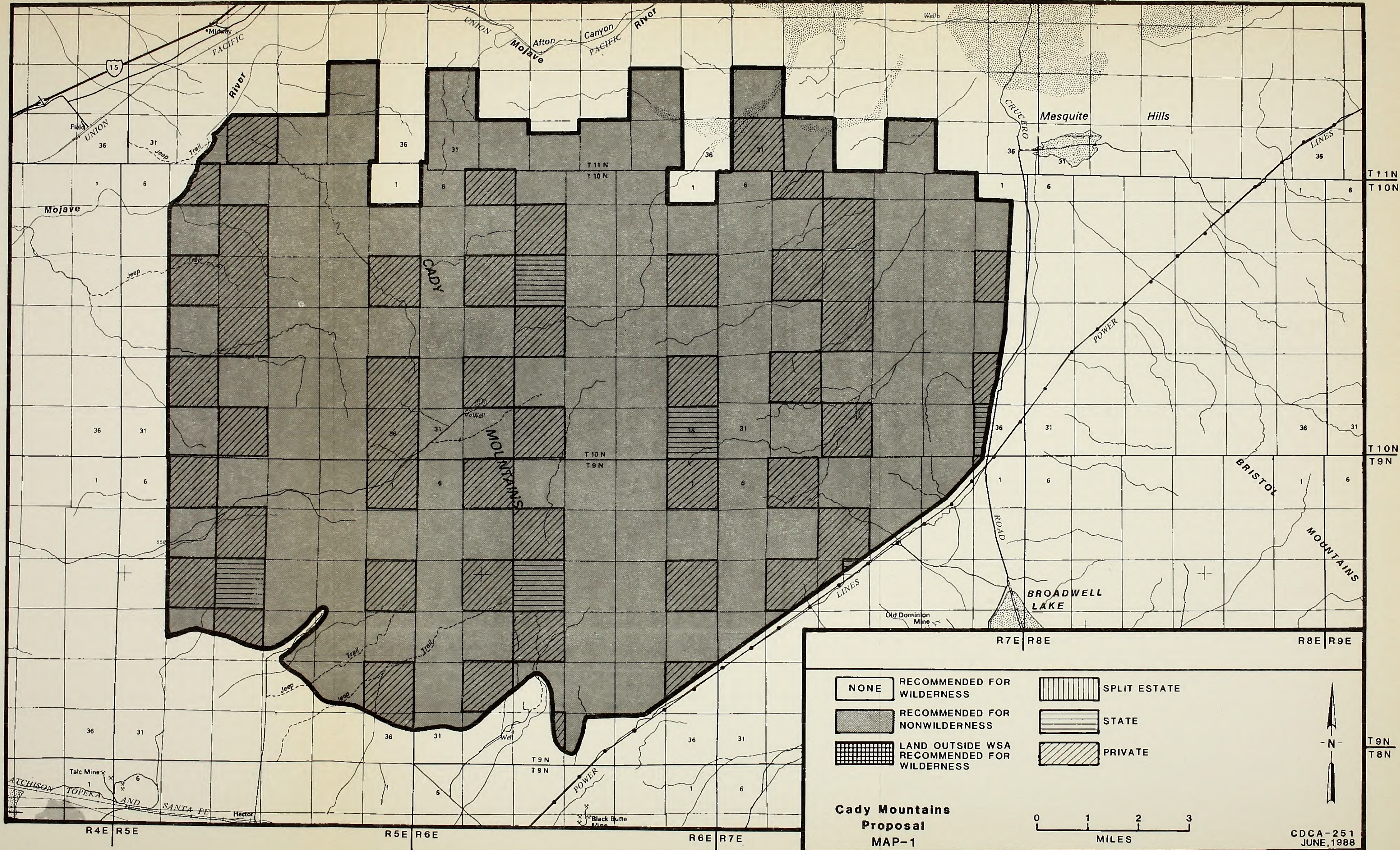
Historical recreation use in the area is considered significant and is dependent upon vehicle access. There are 46 miles of routes of travel within the WSA. Use levels are considered high and are primarily associated with recreational off-highway vehicle (OHV) travel for quail hunting and rockhounding. The Cady Mountains offer excellent rockhounding opportunities for agates, jasper, and chalcedony.

The area surrounding the WSA has a long history of mineral exploration and development. Portions of the WSA have moderate potentials for gold, fluorite, silica, lead, and pumice. Currently, 47 mining claims encumber an estimated 940 acres of the WSA.

The wildlife and vegetative resources within the area are typical of the surrounding desert. The area contains no unusual plants or State- or Federally-listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species. Wildlife values include the Cady Mountains desert bighorn sheep herd. Few Native American resources are documented for the WSA. The area was traditionally used by the Chemehuevi and the Serrano. Several areas of cultural resource sensitivity also occur in the area.

The WSA contains portions of the Afton Canyon Grazing Allotment which is managed under the Cady Mountain-Cronese Lake Allotment Management Plan (1983). The allotment contains several grandfathered range improvements, one of which is a well, storage tank and corral in Hidden Valley. The improvement is visible throughout portions of Hidden Valley which is in the heart of the WSA and the surrounding peaks in the Cady Mountains.

Although the area possesses wilderness values that adequately satisfy the criteria set forth in Section 2(c) of the 1984 Wilderness Act, they are not sufficiently distinctive to override the area's other uses and warrant inclusion into the National Wilderness Preservation System. The WSA would be best managed and maintained under nonwilderness and a combination of low and moderate intensity management guidelines as prescribed in the CDCA Plan. Sensitive resource values will not be devalued, the quality of desert bighorn sheep habitat will be maintained, and opportunities for vehicle dependent recreational pursuits will continue to be available.



- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|--------------|
| NONE | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS | SPLIT ESTATE |
| RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS | | STATE |
| LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS | | PRIVATE |

**Cady Mountains
Proposal
MAP-1**



CDCA-251
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	77,015
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		3,093
Private		28,130
Total		108,238
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	77,015
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		77,015

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Historic evidence of mining exploration is scattered throughout the WSA. Some improvements, including a dirt air strip, can be found on the private inholdings which comprise approximately 30 percent of the WSA. The 46 miles of routes throughout the WSA provide good two and four-wheel drive access. The range improvement in Hidden Valley impacts the naturalness of the central portion of the WSA. However, the majority of the area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature and generally retains its natural character. Most of the influences of the few man-made features within the area are screened by the varied topography.
2. Solitude: The large size of the area gives the visitor opportunities for a feeling of isolation in the sandy valleys and among the highly eroded exposed ridges. The overall character of the landscape does not reflect the presence of man. The range improvement in Hidden Valley is however, a reminder of man's presence.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The WSA contains vast areas of windblown sand and volcanic ridges, thus providing opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The many miles of existing routes of travel do tend to have a limiting affect on opportunities.
4. Special Features: The BLM sensitive desert bighorn sheep inhabit the WSA. Approximately 75% (50 square miles) of the total range used by this herd is within the WSA. Two big-game watering guzzlers are located in the WSA. The herd size is estimated at 25 individuals. Otherwise, the landforms, ecological diversity, and geologic features are not unusual; they are typical of features common throughout the surrounding deserts and mountains.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 77,015 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. The Cady Mountains WSA would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BIM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,190,894
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,577,090

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of eight major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and BIM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BIM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of nine BIM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Joshua Tree Wilderness, administered by Joshua Tree National Monument, 50 miles south of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Cady Mountains WSA is not manageable as wilderness. Several significant issues make it futile to attempt to maintain the existing wilderness values into the future.

Private inholdings comprise approximately 30% of the WSA, forming a mosaic pattern of land ownership that makes it impossible to assure that existing wilderness values could be maintained. This ownership pattern results in many portions of the WSA being noncontiguous with the rest of the area. Purchase and/or exchange of the private inholdings would be very difficult and costly. Also, there are so many parcels that during the time required to initiate and complete acquisition for specific parcels, uses not compatible with wilderness may occur on other parcels.

The County of San Bernardino Consolidated General Plan designates the area for Rural Conservation Uses (RCN). Parcel size on RCN designated areas is limited to 40 acres except that parcels less than 40 acres in size can also be utilized for a number of allowable uses. The zoning is Desert Living development for residential, commercial, industrial, or manufacturing uses. Also, other development scenarios are allowed with the approval of a conditional use permit. By filing applications for minor subdivisions it would be possible to create over 800 private parcels of land within the WSA. Due to the mosaic ownership patterns, the mixed uses which are possible on these lands would preclude the retention of and management of wilderness values on the public lands.

Enforcement of a vehicle closure, if the area were designated wilderness, would require constant supervision. The area is a favored rockhounding area. Specimens from the area are spectacular, and historical recreational use includes vehicle access to traditional use areas. There are also good hunting opportunities for quail.

Mineral rights would have to be acquired on all valid mining claims to insure manageability in mineralized portions of the WSA. Forty-seven mining claims encumber 940 acres of the WSA. The likelihood for valid mineral rights are considered good. Unless the mineral rights are acquired, existing laws and regulations will be unable to prevent activities that will cause severe impacts to existing wilderness values.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Cady Mountains WSA is located in the BLM Cady Mountains Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the Desert Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 indicated that resource data for this WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated, and

interpreted, at the time of the recommendation process. However, the EIS did indicate that the WSA had potential for manganese and other metals, fluorite, strontium, and uranium. Twenty mining claims were recorded as of the December 12, 1979 in the WSA.

The GRA file in 1980 supported the EIS statements insofar as classifying the WSA for gold, lead, and fluorite potential. GRA classifications in the WSA include about one square mile on private land in the northwestern part of the WSA as having moderate potential for the occurrence of gold and lead based on a known occurrence. This particular location is not mentioned in the GRA report, but is shown on the 1955 Cady Mountain 15-minute Quadrangle map.

The 1980 GRA report classified a small area around the Logan Mine as having high potential for the occurrence of manganese based on past production of 71 tons containing 44% manganese during 1930, and 59 tons of 40.8% manganese in 1942. The southern boundary of the WSA was pulled in to barely exclude this area. The GRA file shows about two square miles in the northwestern part of the WSA as having moderate potential for the occurrence of manganese.

About four square miles in the northwestern part of the WSA were classified as having moderate potential for the occurrence of fluorite based on past production of small tonnage during World War I south of Afton Canyon. This location is not discussed in the GRA report.

The GRA file classified about one-third of a square mile in the northern part of the WSA as having moderate potential for the occurrence of quartz (silica) based on a known occurrence just outside of the WSA. This classification was supported by a map identified in a Southern Pacific report (Collier and Danehy, 1958, Geology and mineral resources of T. 11 N., R. 5 & 6 E., 44p., map 1:24,000) which shows two occurrences of quartz in the northwest portion of the WSA, just outside of the WSA. Nearly one square mile in the southwestern part of the WSA was classified as having moderate potential for the occurrence of pumice based on a reported occurrence. No additional information is available on this prospect. The GRA file classified the northwestern corner of the WSA as having moderate potential for the occurrence of sodium and oil and gas based on the 1978 U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) classification as prospectively valuable. Since there are no known occurrences of sodium in the WSA the potential for occurrence is actually "low" according to the present BLM classification system. Also, since the WSA is not near the overthrust belt and there are no known occurrences of oil and gas in this area, the potential for the occurrence of oil and gas should be considered "low."

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No USGS or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral survey was completed for this WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

Three of four fluorite prospects in the northwestern part of the WSA were described by Miller (1950, Geology of a part of the Afton Fluorite Mining District..., Master of Science Thesis, Stanford University, 26 p., map 1" = 300'). The fluorite occurs as hydrothermal fracture fillings in volcanic rocks. The best showing of fluorite is at the Big Horn workings in the north-central portion of the WSA. This district is also discussed by Chesterman (1957, Fluorspar: Mineral Commodities of California, California Division of Mines Bull. 176, p. 201-204) who states that the largest number of known fluorspar deposits in California is in San Bernardino County. According to Chesterman, numerous veins occur in this district near Afton with fluorite-bearing zones ranging from one foot to 50 feet in thickness and traceable for nearly 2,000 feet on the surface. Some of the fluorspar occurs in veins that range from a few inches to four feet in thickness. Chesterman stated that the richer parts of the fluorspar-bearing zones locally contain ten to 40 percent fluorite, but such areas are small. An analysis of representative samples showed a range of 35 to 86 percent calcium fluoride, eight to 44 percent silica, and two to 29 percent calcium carbonate. These data support the 1980 BLM GRA classification.

Southern Pacific identified the two manganese prospects which occur in this area, one of which is in the WSA. The occurrence is limited to an area of eight by ten feet thick in Tertiary-age tuff breccia. According to the SP report. "It is very doubtful that the manganese will occur in the pre-Tertiary bedrock complex or that there will be much continuity in the depth. The other occurrence, 0.25 miles outside of the WSA, was described as small and not of commercial value. Based on these observations and the fact that there has been no production of manganese from the northern part of the Cady Mountains, the potential for the occurrences of manganese resources in the WSA is classified as having a low potential, reducing the 1980 BLM GRA classification.

In 1987, a plan of operation was filed for open pit precious metals mining in the northwestern part of the WSA. The proposed mine site is within a mile of the area classified as having moderate potential for the occurrence of lead and gold in the 1980 GRA file. There are two other gold/copper occurrences in this general area. One of these is in section 35 (T. 11 N., R. 5 E. (Collier & Danehy, p. 7)). The second one is in section 11 (T. 10 N., R. 5 E.) (Dibblee and Bassett, 1966, Geologic map of the Cady Mountains Quadrangle..., USGS Miscellaneous Geologic Investigations, Map I-467, 1:62,500). The moderate potential boundary on the WSA mineral potential map was expanded to include all four occurrence sites for gold and is shown on the accompanying mineral potential map.

Since there are no known occurrences of sodium in the WSA the potential for occurrence is considered as being low under the BLM classification system. In addition, since the WSA is not near the overthrust belt and there are no known occurrences of oil and gas in this area, the potential for the occurrence of oil and gas should be considered low.

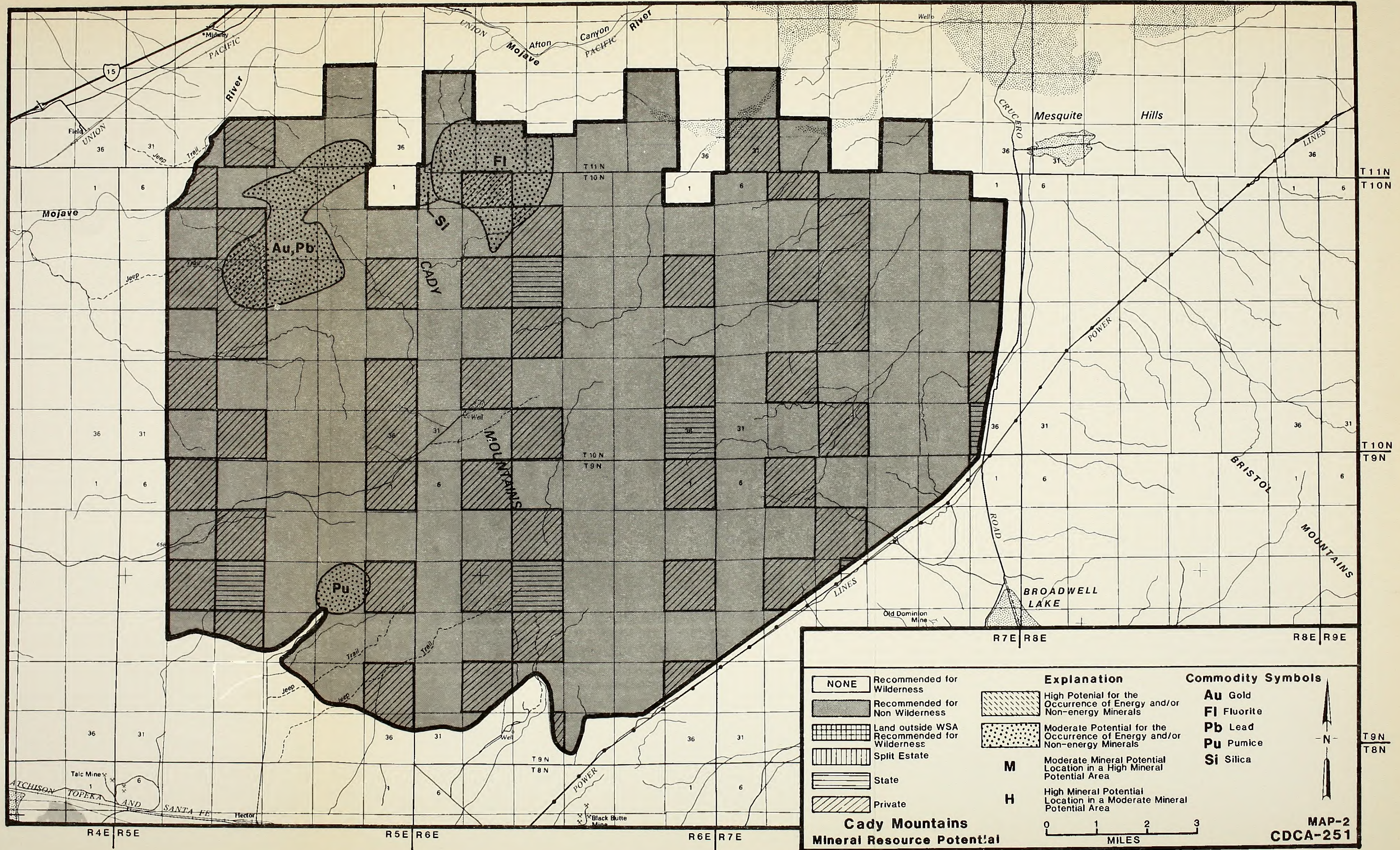
Unpatented lode mining claims are concentrated in the northwest and south-central portion of the WSA. Unpatented mineral claims in the WSA are summarized in the following table taken from BLM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	N/A	47	47	N/A	940	940
Placer	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mill Sites	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	47	47	N/A	940	940

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Any private development and access requirements for the vast acreage of private land spread throughout the WSA will negatively impact naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Continued use of the existing routes of travel by vehicle-dependent recreationists will impact opportunities for solitude. Any additional energy or communication facilities built in the utility corridor will impact values along the southeastern edge of the WSA. The noise, surface disturbance and access requirements for any mineral exploration and development will also negatively impact naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Military aircraft engaged in low-level maneuvers will continue to momentarily disrupt solitude.
2. Impact on Minerals and Energy: Opportunities for exploration and development of minerals and energy will continue to be available subject to applicable laws, regulations and the moderate and low intensity management guidelines established in the CDCA Plan.
3. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep Habitat: The habitat in the mountainous portions of the WSA will continue to receive priority consideration over conflicting land uses according to the low intensity, multiple use management prescriptions contained in the CDCA Plan. Opportunities will be available for vehicle access to maintain existing sheep watering guzzlers.
4. Impact on Future Utility Corridor Development: Opportunities will continue to be available for full utilization and development of the utility corridor designated in the CDCA Plan.



5. Impact on Cultural Resource Values: Applicable laws and regulations will continue to provide protection of sensitive resources.
6. Impact on Livestock Management: Opportunities will continue to be available for the development of range improvements and the management of livestock to maximize proper utilization of forage produced on the public lands.
7. Impact on Vehicle-Dependent Recreation: Opportunities will continue to be available for motorized vehicle travel on designated routes of travel. Access will be available to traditional rockhounding and quail hunting areas.
8. Impact on Private Lands Development: Private lands can continue to be utilized according to county planning standards. The issuance of BIM rights-of-way will be less constrained by the nonsuitability recommendation.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments indicated the presence of several access routes which are used by rockhounders and for access to mines. Other comments agreed with the findings. Mining areas along the southern boundary were excluded from further wilderness consideration, where appropriate.
2. Study Phase: Of the 50 letters on this WSA, a large majority (43) opposed further consideration of this area for wilderness; seven letters favored wilderness. Two major groups responded on this unit: four-wheel drive enthusiasts and rock collectors. The first group mentioned the long-time use of this area for family and vehicle-oriented recreation, such as rockhounding, motorcycling, trail riding, competitive events, picnicking, photography, hunting, and camping. Rock collectors called the Cady Mountains a "rockhound's paradise," stating that this is one of the best-loved camping, collecting, and sightseeing areas in the desert and that elderly winter visitors need motorized access to collecting spots.

Many features were mentioned which respondents felt detracted from the area's wilderness potential: mining operations, power lines, fences, structures, stock corrals, windmills, and the noise of two railroads, trucks on major highways, and low-flying military aircraft. Several letters mentioned vehicle routes which they thought should be classified as "roads." Others were concerned about the relatively large proportion of privately owned land within the study area; one suggested that the amount of public land amounted to less than 5,000 acres.

A few respondents asked that the road from Ludlow to Crucero, which passes by Broadwell Lake and Mesquite Springs, be kept open to provide access to Afton Canyon. One letter stated that vehicle access is needed by university classes to reach fossil beds in the Cady Mountains. Two oil companies noted the potential for geothermal resources in the region and the desire to explore for, and to develop this resource, as well as oil and gas. A cement company feared that its operations might conflict with the requirement for Class I air quality within a wilderness area and asked for a one-mile buffer zone. Several letters mentioned the presence of the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad remnants and a portion of the Old Mojave Trail and stated that these were not compatible with wilderness.

Proponents of wilderness designation for this WSA noted that it meets the 2(c) criteria and that it provides a feeling of solitude and excellent opportunities for primitive recreation. Its closeness to the Los Angeles area makes it a convenient location for wilderness backpacks for groups such as the boy scouts. One respondent stated that the historical remnants of the Tonopah-Tidewater railroad could be better protected under wilderness management. Another suggested that Troy Lake should be added to the study area.

Nine letters were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). All were opposed to wilderness for this WSA. Four gem and mineral organizations sent letters, one of which was accompanied by a 53-signature petition. They mentioned the popularity of this area with rockhounds and recreationists of all ages and the need for vehicle access on roads and washes. The large proportion of private land was again noted.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were few comments specific to WSA 251 in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) groups. Some individual mining and OHV groups also presented their positions. NOC sent their own "multiple use map" in which they classified WSA

as mostly "intensive use," with a little "moderate use" area on the west side. This recommendation was similar to that of the Use Alternative. Conservation organizations and some individuals preferred the Protection Alternative, which recommended "controlled use," or wilderness, for most of the area with a small amount of "limited use" on the west.

4. Proposed Plan: The Proposed Plan recommended "limited use" for most of the Cady Mountains and "moderate use" for the western portion of the study area. Vehicle-oriented recreationists and miners maintained the position of wanting more access to the Cady Mountains. Conservationists were partially content with the recommendation, although there were still some people who wanted wilderness for this area.

No comments were received from local government.

Mesquite Spring

CDCA 251A

MESQUITE SPRINGS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-251A)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

25,818 acres

The Mesquite Spring WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 18,564 acres of public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 548 acres of lands belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totaling approximately 6,622 acres. 84 acres of split-estate lands exist within the WSA boundaries (See Map 1 and Table 1).

The northern boundary of this triangular-shaped study area is the Union Pacific Railroad. The southern boundary of the area is the northern edge of the utility line right-of-way. The western boundary is a portion of the old Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad grade and a wood pole utility line.

All of the study area is within the 1.5 million acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated by the Secretary of the Interior in conjunction with approval of the California Desert Plan in 1980. Additionally, 5000 acres containing cultural resources and located within the western portion of the study area are within the Mesquite Hills/Crucero Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

The study area consists of roughly 75% public lands in the north, with alternating strips of non public lands in the south. The area contains 45% sand-covered plains, 40% sand-covered alluvial fans, 13% sand-covered hills and two percent playas. The WSA includes the scattered Mesquite Hills and sloping alluvial formation associated with the northern end of the Bristol Mountains. The landform in the northeastern portion of the WSA is influenced by the Devil's Playground, an area containing deep deposits of wind-blown sand. Elevations within the study area range from 988 feet on the alluvium to 1568 feet atop Crucero Hill. Vegetation is sparse consisting primarily of creosote bush and bursage in the rocky alluvium in the southern portion of the WSA. Deposits of windblown sand covered with some grasses and scattered saltbush and mesquite hummocks occupy the remainder of the WSA. Mesquite Spring, an ephemeral water source in the north-central portion of the WSA provides temporary pools of water for a limited representation of wildlife species. No permanent water sources exist within the WSA. No BLM sensitive plants or wildlife and no Federal- or State-listed rare, threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species are known to exist.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ----

0 acres recommended for
wilderness
18,564 BLM acres recommended for
nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The no-wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale:

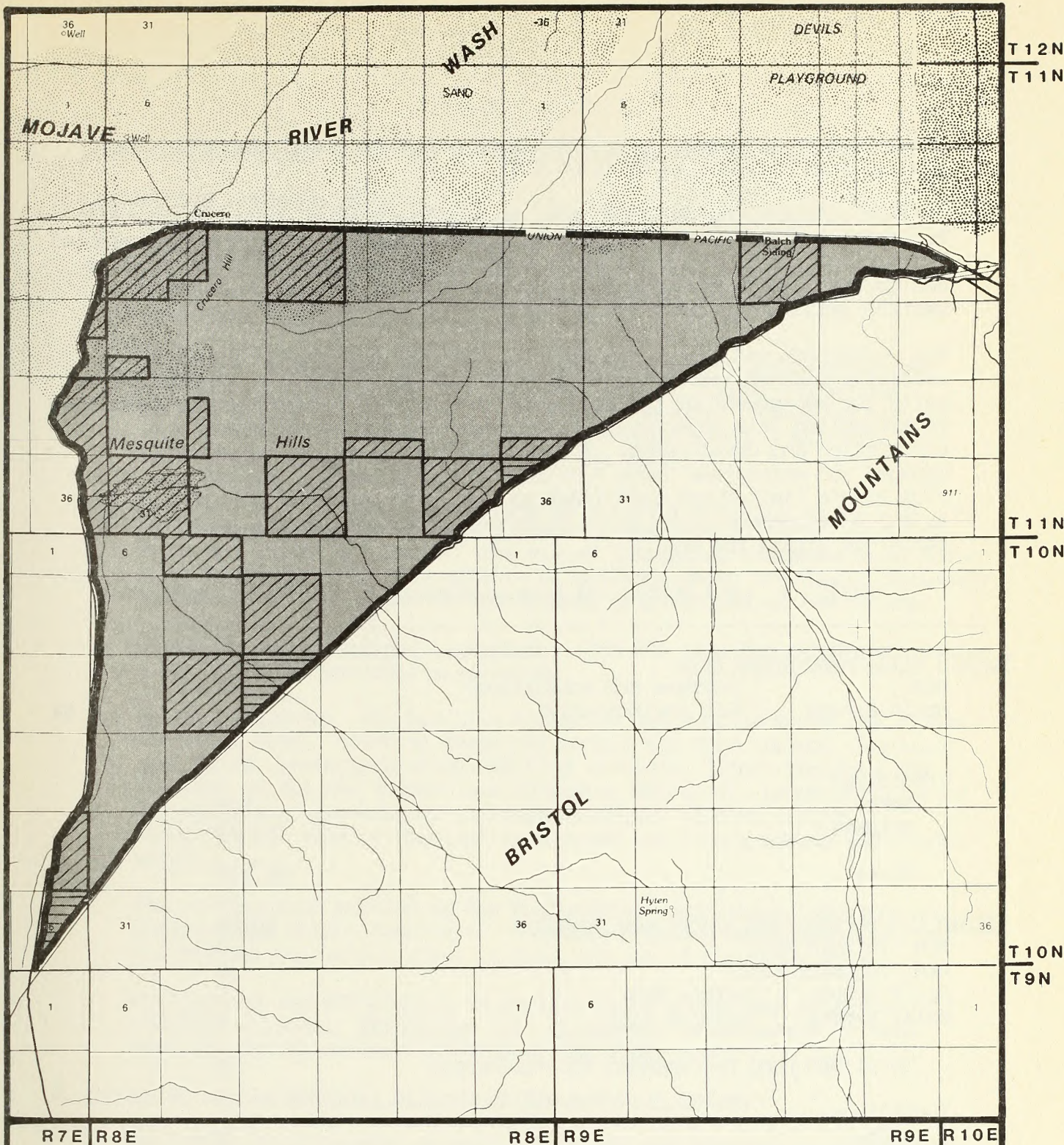
(1) the WSA does not contain any noteworthy special features and would not contribute to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System; (2) the WSA possesses only marginal wilderness values; and (3) manageability as wilderness is further complicated by the presence of sizeable non-Federal inholdings and by the presence of a designated utility corridor partially within the WSA.

The Mesquite Springs WSA, while natural in character, contains no unusual features or resources, and is merely an area of undeveloped public land. Designation of this area as wilderness would not contribute to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System. It is ecologically similar to other areas identified for wilderness designation. Within 50 miles are eight other BLM study areas recommended for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Many of these eight areas display the same ecosystem and landforms as this WSA, and also contain notable special features of scientific and general recreation and sightseeing interest. There are approximately eight miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

The WSA lies south of the Razor Off-Highway Vehicle Open Area and receives moderate recreation use (less than 5000 visitor use days annually), which is almost exclusively off-highway vehicle (OHV) use for touring and upland game hunting. Demand for primitive recreation opportunities in this WSA is almost nonexistent. The area receives little use presumably because there is little to attract visitors, who are drawn instead to other nearby areas containing a wealth of special features.

Approximately 30 percent of the WSA is composed of non-Federal lands. This sizable acreage, consisting of numerous individual parcels, would have to be acquired to assure that uses incompatible with wilderness management do not occur.

The Consolidated General Plan of San Bernardino County designates the private parcels within the WSA for Rural Conservation and limits the size of lots to no less than 40 acres. Zoning is designated for Desert Living.



NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

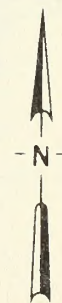
STATE

PRIVATE

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE



Mesquite Spring
Proposal

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-251A
JUNE, 1988

Under County guidelines, over 300 parcels could be designated with uses ranging from residential to industrial.

Finally, designating the study area as wilderness would have the potential to conflict with development of future communication and energy transmission facilities. Portions of the south boundary are within a utility corridor designated by both the CDCA Plan and the State of California in their Western Regional Corridor Study (1980).

The wilderness values are not notable. The WSA has greater value for carefully managed resource uses than it does as wilderness. The CDCA Plan calls for management of the area under low intensity multiple use guidelines to accomplish this objective, while permitting access for mineral exploration and development. The resource values in the WSA would be managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's limited use guidelines coupled with restrictions outlined in existing management plans serve to lessen potential impacts to sensitive resources within the WSA.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>	84
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	18,564	
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)		
Inholdings			
State		548	
Private		6,622	
Total		<u>25,818</u>	
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>	
BLM (within WSA)		0	
BLM (outside WSA)		0	
Split Estate (within WSA)		0	
Split Estate (outside WSA)		0	
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>	
Inholdings			
State		0	
Private		0	
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>	
BLM (surface and subsurface)		18,564	
Split Estate (BLM surface only)		84	
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>18,648</u>	

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area is affected primarily by natural forces. Primitive routes utilized by OHV recreationists occur in the western one-third of the WSA. Overall, man's imprints are substantially unnoticeable within the WSA.
2. Solitude: Some opportunities for solitude are available within the northern portion of the WSA. However, outside sights and sounds detrimentally affect solitude throughout the area. These intrusions include noise from trains passing on the Union Pacific Railroad line which forms the northern boundary of the WSA.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The WSA provides opportunities for a primitive recreational experience.
4. Special Features: The Mesquite Hills/Crucero ACEC is contained within the study area. Cultural resources within the ACEC include temporary camp sites, petroglyph sites, milling stations, lithic scatters and remnants of the old Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad. Large portions of the study area are subject to intense natural erosive forces. Deposition of sand by "moving" sand dunes has likely buried additional sites.

The northwestern portion of the WSA contains properties important to contemporary Native Americans. Chemehuevi tribes have identified traditional collection areas in this portion of the study area.

Portions of the WSA contain an unusual plant assemblage consisting of mesquite (Prosopis glandulosa var. torreyana) which occurs on sand hummocks in the northern portion of the study area.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 18,564 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. This ecosystem is widespread in the California Desert and is represented within the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/ Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,249,435
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/ Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,635,541

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of eight major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of eight BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 150 miles south of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Mesquite Spring WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, manageability as such would require signing of all boundaries as terrain does not preclude OHV travel into the WSA. The WSA's proximity to the community of Baker, California, and the Razor Off-Highway Vehicle Open Area does complicate management as local residents have enjoyed a long history of recreational use of the area. Long-term use patterns may be difficult to change.

Designating the study area as wilderness has potential to conflict with development of future communication and energy transmission facilities. The south boundary is within a utility corridor identified both in the CDCA Plan and the Western Regional Corridor Study (1980). This corridor has not reached its development capacity although many of the 16 utility corridors identified in the CDCA Plan are nearing capacity. Wilderness designation would prohibit full development of the corridor, forcing installation of new energy transmission lines in other corridors or in areas not previously disturbed. Depending upon which WSAs are ultimately designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may be constraints placed upon the long-term energy and communication transmission capabilities in the southwestern United States.

Maintenance of wilderness values is also at risk because 30 percent of this WSA is in non-Federal ownership. Unless all or most of these inholdings can be acquired, it will be impossible to assure that uses incompatible with wilderness management will not occur.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Mesquite Spring WSA is in the BLM Bristol Mountains Geology-Energy-Minerals G-E-M Resource Area (GRA). BLM G-E-M data in the wilderness section of the CDCA plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III, 1980) indicated that the mineral resource data for the WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated and interpreted at the time the wilderness recommendations were made. However, it did state that the WSA had potential for metals, sodium and potassium, and for oil and gas. No unpatented mining claims were known to have been recorded with BLM as of December 12, 1979 in the WSA.

Data from the 1980 BLM GRA file was incomplete and did not assess mineral potential classification for mineral resources in the WSA. The 1980 BLM GRA file documented the presence of a known occurrence of copper bearing minerals in the mountainous central portion of the

WSA which is not verified by the County Report: Mines and mineral resources of San Bernardino County (Wright, L.A. et al., 1953, California Division of Mines, Journal of Mines and Geology, Vol. 49).

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Decision: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys were conducted in the WSA because it is recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation.

A map by Majmundar (1983, Technical map of the Geothermal Resources of California, California Division of Mines and Geology, scale 1:750,000) shows the WSA to be in an area with potential for the occurrence of geothermal energy resources. However, there has been no interest in geothermal exploration or in oil and gas exploration or development since the preliminary EIS was written. Therefore, these commodities, along with sodium and potassium are considered to have a low occurrence potential. Due to the low potential no mineral resource potential map was prepared for this WSA.

There have not been any plans of operation filed, and there are no unpatented mining claims on record with the BLM for this WSA as of December, 1987.

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Under low intensity management, there will be no immediate impact. Over the long-term, existing opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation will slowly decline with projected gradually increasing OHV use of the area.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available. However, no claims are currently on file with the Bureau. Should interest increase, mining activities would be restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines outlined in the CDCA and EMNSA Plans which limit vehicle access and mitigate adverse effects on sensitive resource values.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the EMNSA Plan.
4. Impact on Energy and Utility Corridors: Full utilization of the utility corridor would be allowed consistent with CDCA Plan guidelines.

5. Impact on Cultural Resources: Existing Federal laws and BLM policy along with restrictions outlined in existing management plans will lessen the magnitude of loss caused by surface disturbing activities by requiring extensive mitigation or avoidance of any impacts to these sites.
6. Impact on Native American Uses and Values: Native American access to traditional religious sites will be retained.
7. Impact on Unusual Plant Assemblage: The UPA will continue to be managed according to the guidelines provided for this resource in the ACEC management plan.
8. Impact on Private Land Development: Private lands can be subdivided and developed according to county guidelines. Rights-of-way will continue to be processed by the Bureau through applications for discretionary approvals.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: All comments dealt with study phase considerations.
2. Study Phase: Ten comments were received on this WSA, all of which favored continued multiple use management of the area. Geothermal potential, for which a non competitive lease application has been filed, exists in the area; wilderness designation could exclude exploration for this needed resource. Oil and gas reserves may also exist. The most frequently expressed objection to this area as potential wilderness was the presence of a large proportion of privately owned land within the unit. The popularity of the sand hills near Crucero for off-highway recreation was also mentioned by several respondents. Other features which were said to detract from the area's wilderness quality were a transmission line, the railroad on the north, mines and prospects, and the signs of heavy off-highway vehicle use. The flatness of the land and the lack of screening made it difficult to achieve a feeling of solitude.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were no comments specific to this WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this was one of the many WSAs opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle organizations. A large number of club members sent in letters and printed coupons supporting the NOC's recommendation for multiple use classification of "intensive use" (open to motorized vehicles) for this area. This was in agreement with the Use Alternative. Conservation groups wanted protection for this area; some accepted the recommendation of the Protection Alternative of "limited use," while others wanted wilderness designation.
4. Proposed Plan: The Proposed Plan recommended a classification of "moderate use" for this WSA. This was satisfactory to neither the members of NOC nor Conservation oriented individuals. The former continued to propose open vehicular access for this area, while the latter wanted more protection - at least "limited use." Comments were of a general nature and did not refer specifically to this WSA.

No comments were received from local governments.

Sleeping Beauty Mountains

CDCA 252

SLEEPING BEAUTY WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-252)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 33,110 acres

The Sleeping Beauty WSA is located in west-central San Bernardino County within the central portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The triangular-shaped area is located between Interstates 40 and 15 approximately 35 miles east of Barstow. The WSA includes 23,282 acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 919 acres of land owned by the State of California, and 8,909 acres of privately held inholdings (See Map 1 and Table 1).

The northwestern boundary is located along a line 400 feet south of three high voltage power transmission lines except where the service road extends beyond the 400 feet and then the boundary is the service road. The northeastern boundary follows topographic lines to avoid an old mine and intersects the eastern boundary, which is a graded road, at the northern end of Broadwell Lake. The southern boundary connects the eastern and northwestern boundaries. It is not aligned with any specific physical features but meanders along the base of the South Cady Mountains, avoiding extensive mining scars and patented mining claims (See Map 1). Portions of the WSA are within future utility corridor (1990-2020) identified for the State of California in the Western Regional Corridor Study (1980).

The WSA contains the South Cady Mountains which includes the Sleeping Beauty rock formation. This formation, when viewed from a distance, resembles the silhouette of a sleeping woman. A large sweeping bajada is located near the center of the WSA, sloping eastward toward Broadwell Dry Lake. The WSA includes approximately 50% hills, 40% alluvial fans, and ten percent dissected alluvial fans and contains primarily a creosote bush scrub vegetative assemblage. Elevations range from 1300 feet to 3980 feet.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed by the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the areas wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 0 acres recommended for wilderness 23,282 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Sleeping Beauty WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts. Future activities in the area will be controlled by a combination of moderate and low intensity multiple use management.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The mosaic pattern of land ownership, popularity of the area for vehicle-dependent recreation, and known potential for mineral development are of greater significance than the area's value as wilderness. Designation of this area as wilderness would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). Overall, the area has very low quality wilderness values. Other similar WSAs in the California Desert that are recommended suitable offer a more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values.

Existing land ownership patterns substantially reduce the ability of the BLM to manage the area for wilderness. Approximately 30% of the WSA is non-public land. The mosaic land ownership pattern breaks up the WSA into north-south strips of public land with many isolated east-west fingerlike extensions. This results in the eastern half of the WSA not being contiguous with the western half.

Historical recreation use in the area is considered significant and is dependent upon vehicle access. There are approximately 26 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. An abandoned railroad grade parallels the eastern border of the WSA. Recreation use is primarily associated with off-highway vehicle (OHV) use supporting quail hunting and rockhounding. Rockhounding opportunities for agates, jasper, jaganite, obsidian, chalcedony, calcite crystals, quartz crystals, geodes, banded onyx, nodules, dehydritic materials, opalite, silicates, and petrified palm wood and reed are considered excellent.

The area has a long history of mineral exploration as well as potential for mineral development. Currently 14 mining claims encumber 280 acres of the WSA. Portions of the WSA have moderate and high potentials for occurrence of manganese and moderate potentials for barite, geothermal steam resources, sodium compounds, and sand and gravel.

The wildlife and vegetative resources within the area are typical of the surrounding desert. The area contains no unusual plants or State- or Federally-listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species. The bighorn sheep, a BLM sensitive species, inhabits a portion of the area. However, based upon management prescriptions in the CDCA Plan, the sheep habitat is not expected to be adversely impacted by other conflicting land uses.

Any future management scenarios for the Cady Mountain Grazing Allotment will have greater flexibility and latitude under nonwilderness. Virtually the entire WSA is within the allotment. The WSA contains no significant cultural resource values or Native American concerns.

The resource values present in the WSA would be best managed and maintained under nonwilderness and a combination of low and moderate intensity management guidelines as prescribed in the CDCA Plan.

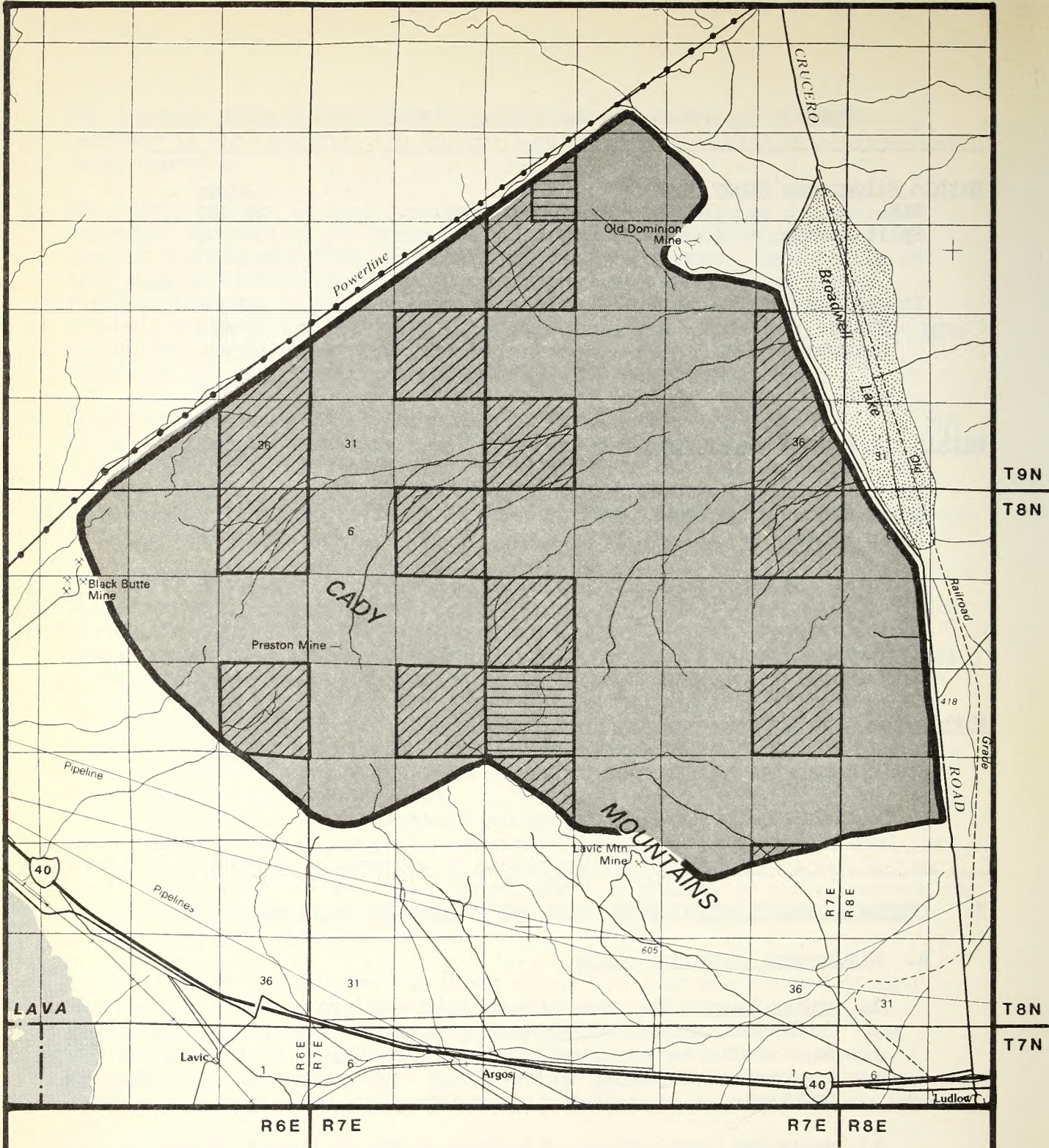
TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	23,282
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		919
Private		8,909
Total		<u>33,110</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	23,282
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>23,282</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area is relatively undisturbed by man. Man's influence, which includes mining access routes and a few abandoned mine shafts and prospect holes, is generally unnoticeable due to the topographic screening in the hills. The access network within the WSA includes approximately 26 miles of historic routes of travel.
2. Solitude: The variety of terrain in the South Cady Mountains offers many opportunities for solitude by providing areas of seclusion and isolation. However, the power transmission lines which form the northern boundary of the WSA, are visible from many portions of the WSA. The hum of the transmission lines can also be heard near the northern border of the WSA. On the bajada, the lack of topographic and vegetative screening can have a limiting effect on opportunities for solitude.



NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

**Sleeping Beauty Mountains
Proposal
MAP-1**

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-252
JUNE, 1988

Three designated low-level flight corridors crisscross the WSA, in which military aircraft conduct experimental, and routine training exercises at elevations as low as 100 feet above the ground. Opportunities for solitude are virtually non-existent when such missions are being conducted.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Types of Recreation: Visitors can experience both the intimacy of small, enclosed areas in the hills and canyons, and the vastness and openness of the large bajada between the South Cady Mountains and the Cady Mountains. The relative absence of internal man-made features, with the exception of the routes of travel, enhances opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.
4. Special Features: Desert bighorn sheep inhabit the mountainous portion of the WSA. Approximately ten percent (eight square miles) of the total range used by this herd is within the WSA. The herd size is estimated at 25 individuals and thought to be declining. The cause for decline is unknown. The remaining landforms, ecological diversity, and geologic features are not unusual, they are typical of features common throughout the surrounding deserts and mountains.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 23,282 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. The WSA would not increase the diversity of the types of ecosystems represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,244,627
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,630,823

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of eight major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of eight BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness is Joshua Tree Wilderness, administered by Joshua Tree National Monument, 45 miles south of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Sleeping Beauty WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, several significant issues would seriously complicate manageability of the area for wilderness.

Private inholdings comprise approximately 30% of the WSA, forming a mosaic pattern of land ownership that makes it difficult to assure that existing wilderness values could be maintained. Because of the private inholdings, the eastern and western halves of the WSA are not contiguous. Purchase and/or exchange of the private inholdings will be very difficult. Also, during the time required to initiate and complete acquisition for specific parcels, uses not compatible with wilderness may occur on other parcels.

Enforcement of a vehicle closure, if the area were designated wilderness, would require constant supervision. The area is a favored rockhounding area. Specimens from the area are spectacular, and historical use includes vehicle access to traditional use areas. There are also good hunting opportunities for quail.

The WSA and surrounding area has a long history of mineral activity. The WSA contains moderate to high mineral potentials, some of which lie on private lands. Mineral development would create significant manageability problems for wilderness.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Sleeping Beauty Mountain WSA (CDCA-252) is located in the BLM Cady Mountains Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The BLM G-E-M narrative in the wilderness portion of the Desert Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) indicates that in 1980 the resource data for this WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated, and interpreted. The draft GRA report (1980) indicated that there was a moderate potential for sodium and manganese within the eastern portion of the WSA. The report shows that the western portion of the WSA includes an area of high potential for manganese near the Black Butte Mine. Also within the western portion of the WSA are areas of moderate potential for geothermal steam resources, and sand and gravel. An area of high potential for the occurrence of manganese deposits was located in the southern portion of the WSA one-half of a mile north of the Lavic Mine. The GRA indicated, in 1980, that an area near the Preston Mine in the western portion of the WSA, was classified as having a moderate potential for barite deposits (used in oil and gas drilling). The GRA also indicated a high potential for barite deposits in the southern portion of the WSA near the Lavic Mine.

Manganese was mined outside the boundary of the WSA during World Wars I and II. The Black Butte (Big Reef) Mine, barely outside the western boundary of the WSA, produced several hundred tons of manganese ore. The Lee Yim (Lavic Mountain) deposit, about one half of a mile south of the WSA, produced 100 tons of manganese ore during World War I. The Paymaster Mine, about one half of a mile south of the WSA, was prospected by an open cut, but has been idle for many years. The Reinerth prospect, in the southeastern part of the WSA, produced ten tons of manganese in 1917.

Small portions of the WSA were classified by the U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS) in 1978 as being prospectively valuable for sodium (within a one mile zone along the eastern boundary, adjacent to

Broadwell Lake). This classification was based on drilling conducted by the USGS in 1978 in Broadwell Lake. This drilling revealed 1700-2400 mg/l concentrations of sodium in groundwater (Calzia, J.P., 1979, Open File Report II 7-C).

About one and one-half square miles in the western portion of the WSA had been classified by the USGS in 1978 as prospectively valuable for geothermal resources. The BLM G-E-M classified this area as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of geothermal steam resources.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: No USGS or Bureau of Mines mineral survey was completed for this WSA because the WSA is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The GRA files identified an area having a high potential for barite in the southern end of the WSA near the Lavic mine. Because there is no mention of this location in the draft GRA report or other geologic references, the classification appears to be a mapping error and has been deleted as an area of barite potential under the BLM classification system. The potential for the occurrence of barite in the WSA, based on known occurrences of barite at the Preston mine, is therefore a moderate potential for occurrence under the BLM classification system. On June 29, 1987, Caltrans requested authorization for nine exploration holes for sand and gravel testing just west of the western boundary of the WSA. About one-fourth of a square mile of this deposit extends into the WSA at two locations with moderate potential for sand and gravel under the BLM classification system. Unpatented mining claims are summarized in the following table taken from BLM records dated January, 1988.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	14	14	N/A	280	280
Placer	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	14	14	N/A	280	280

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Noise, surface disturbance and access requirements from potential mineral exploration and development activities will result in moderate adverse impacts to naturalness, solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. These impacts will be localized within the areas of moderate to high mineral potential that encompass less than ten percent of the WSA. There will be adverse impacts to wilderness values from the noise and surface disturbance related to off-highway vehicle use because current use patterns and use levels are expected to continue to increase gradually.
2. Impact on Mineral Exploration and Development: Mineral exploration and development opportunities will be available, but the bulk of the mineral potential is within the mountainous area where limited use guidelines in the CDCA Plan require strict mitigating measures and environmental safeguards to protect sensitive natural values. Applicable stipulations include limitations upon access in desert bighorn habitat and design specifications to reduce visual contrasts of access roads and processing facilities.
3. Impact on Vehicle-Dependent Recreation: Use levels relative to accessing traditional rockhounding and hunting areas will continue to be available and are expected to gradually increase.
4. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep Habitat: Management guidelines in the CDCA Plan will continue to provide for protection of the habitat over conflicting land uses. Such protection includes controlling off-highway vehicle travel and limiting mining exploration and/or development during the lambing season.
5. Impact on the Energy and Communication Transmission: Nondesignation of this WSA will allow possible use of this WSA for utility transmission. Depending upon the final juxtaposition of WSAs ultimately designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may or may not be constraints to development of future utility corridors

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore no further discussion of it will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan which was finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parenthesis.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments referred to the presence of roads and ways and noted mining operations and potential mineral resources. Some roads were field-checked and excluded from further wilderness consideration, where appropriate.
2. Study Phase: Thirty-two comments were received on this WSA. Thirty favored continued multiple use management for this area; two favored wilderness designation. The major point of comment was the desire to be able to continue rock collecting in this area, particularly the southern part of the Cady Mountains. This type of recreation is suitable for the elderly and for families, but motorized access is usually required. Thus, the respondents wanted to keep the area open for this type of activity. Minerals collected in this area include: agates, jasper, jaganite, obsidian, dehydritic materials, opalite, silicates, and petrified wood and reed. Commercially important minerals also found here are manganese, barite, strontium, and bentonite clay. Energy resources, including geothermal, oil, and gas are also said to exist here.

Other types of recreation popular in this unit include backpacking, picnicking, camping, four-wheeling, trail riding, motorcycling, competitive events, and nature study.

Several features were noted which detract from the area's wilderness potential. These include: mining operations, structures, railroad tracks, scars from the Tonopah-Tidewater railroad, four-wheel drive tracks, the large proportion of private land, transmission lines, and noise from trucks on a major highway and from military aircraft. The sweeping bajada was said to provide no feeling of solitude or opportunity for primitive recreation. The remnants of the Tonopah-Tidewater railroad were seen as scars which damaged wilderness quality.

Wilderness proponents said that the area is pristine and untrammled by man. Solitude is guaranteed, and the area has high scientific and scenic values.

Two comments were received in response to the Public Input workbook. Both were from rock collectors who wanted to have this type of activity continued in this area.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were no comments specific to this WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this was one of many WSAs opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle organizations. A large number of club members sent in letters and printed coupons supporting NOC's recommendations for a multiple use classification of "intensive use" (open to motorized vehicles) for this area. This was in agreement with the Use Alternative. Conservation groups wanted protection for this area; some accepted the recommendation of the Protection Alternative of "limited use," while other wanted wilderness designation.

4. Proposed Plan: The Proposed Plan recommended a classification of "moderate use" for most of this WSA. This was satisfactory to neither the members of NOC nor conservation-oriented individuals. The former continued to propose open vehicular use for this area, while the latter wanted more protection - at least "limited use." Comments were of a general nature and did not refer specifically to WSA 252.

No comments were received from local governments.

Bristol/Granite Mountains

CDCA 256

BRISTOL/GRANITE MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-256)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 119,652 acres

The Bristol/Granite Mountains WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the central portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). Baker, California, located roughly 40 miles northwest, is the closest community. The WSA includes 107,256 acres of public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 2,570 acres of State land and 9,826 acres of private land (see Map 1 and Table 1). There are approximately 6,720 acres of split estate holdings encompassing the first 500 feet below the surface.

The boundaries of this triangular-shaped WSA are as follows: the northern boundary follows a gas pipeline right-of-way, excluding any private lands along its length. To the east, the boundary proceeds along a dirt road in Cottonwood Wash. Two small areas of surface disturbance along this boundary have been cherrystemmed out of the WSA and again, private land has been excluded. The southern boundary is delineated by private land boundaries, one small area of surface disturbance, and, for much of its length, Interstate 40.

The Bristol/Granite WSA lies partially within the East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA), designated in 1980 by the Secretary of the Interior. The EMNSA encompasses some 1.5 million acres.

Within this WSA, the Granite Mountains comprise the dominant landform feature. Pinyon pine and juniper cover the upper portions of the mountains. The Old Dad Mountains and the Bristol Mountains are also located within this study area. The Old Dad Mountains appear to be a tilted and bisected volcanic plain, while the Bristol Mountains have a more rolling character. Vegetation on both ranges is sparse. Large valleys, where creosote and mixed desert shrubs dominate, are interspersed between the three ranges. The mountains are rugged throughout, ranging in elevation from 2,200 feet to 6,786 feet. The sharp ridges separate 11 different drainage basins which contain elements of four plant communities and broad ecotonal areas.

Also in 1980, with the signing of the CDCA Plan, 9,600 acres within the Granite Mountains were designated a Research Natural Area, in recognition of the outstanding opportunities available for study of the area's unique diversity of life. In October 1984, the Bureau of Land Management and University of California entered into a cooperative agreement regarding approximately 6,000 acres of public lands within the Granite Mountain Research Natural Area and also included in the WSA. The University uses this area extensively for research and teaching.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was

included in Appendix III of the Final EIS. Five different suitability recommendations were analyzed in the EISs: no wilderness and four partial wilderness alternatives recommending approximately 35%, 40%, 45%, and 95% of the area as suitable for wilderness designation, respectively.

As a result of land exchanges subsequent to the inventory, additional split-estate lands adjacent to or enclosed by the suitable portion of this WSA, were studied under Section 202 of FLPMA. These lands are also recommended for wilderness designation (See Map 1).

2. <u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> ---	43,232	acres recommended for wilderness
	64,024	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

Partial wilderness (36% suitable) is the recommendation for this WSA. The 64,024 acres in this WSA recommended as nonsuitable are released for uses other than wilderness. In addition to the Federal acreage recommended for wilderness, BLM recommends that 35 acres of private land, 1,280 acres of State lands, and 6,720 acres of split-estate holdings be acquired through exchange or purchase and designated as wilderness. With acquisition of these inholdings, a total of 44,597 acres would be designated wilderness. The 64,024 nonsuitable acres are released for uses other than wilderness. Appendix 1 lists all inholdings and provides additional information on their acquisition. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The eastern portion of this study area is recommended as suitable for wilderness designation for the following reasons: (1) the area possesses outstanding wilderness values that exemplify the qualities described in the 1964 Wilderness Act; (2) the area contains a number of special features that would benefit under the increased protective measures afforded by wilderness designation; and (3) the area is unique for its high diversity of plant and animal life.

Within the Granite Mountains, the "earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man" and "man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Opportunities for hiking, backpacking, exploring, nature study and photography are outstanding. Low levels of visitation and the screening effects of some 40 square miles of granite peaks and boulders ensure unlimited opportunities for the seeker of solitude.

The wide variety of topographic features results from the complex geological history. These features include massive light-colored granitic rock mounds, joints, fracture zones and faults, pinnacles, spires, broad washes, low hills and rolling plains. Vertical relief is extreme within the Granite, Old Dads, and Bristol Mountains, with the Granite Mountains proper covering

some 40 square miles. The row upon row of jumbled piles of granitic rock mounds, classic plutons, and scenic vistas combine to produce an illusion of great size.

This area contains numerous special features including unique plants and animals, bighorn sheep, desert tortoise, and significant cultural resources.

In the California Desert, few areas exist that exhibit such a diversity of life forms. Lying at the southwest terminus of four major mountain ranges in the eastern Mojave Desert, these rugged granitic rock mounds are unique in their high diversity of plant and animal species and habitat, reflecting floral and faunal elements of the Great Basin, Sonoran and Mojave Deserts. The montane floral element, which is of disjunct distribution across the Mojave, occurs over a large area of the Granite Mountains. Particularly unique is the occurrence of Canyon Oak which is common in canyons and locally abundant in Bull Canyon. The wildlife community reflects the plant diversity. Over 40 species of mammals, 115 birds, 33 reptiles, and one amphibian are represented. These animals exhibit specific habitat preferences throughout the broad ecotypes, making the area invaluable for the study of these relationships.

Although this area possesses outstanding wilderness qualities, conflicts exist between wilderness values and the development of mineral resources and grazing improvements. Portions of the Granite Mountain Grazing Allotment covers the WSA and supports ephemeral/perennial cattle grazing. Increased development and continued maintenance of this allotment will be somewhat constrained by wilderness designation. Also within the suitable portion, areas of high and moderate mineral potential for the occurrence of copper, silver, iron, gold and zinc can be found. Currently, 12 mining claims, encumbering 480 acres have been located in the Granite Mountains within the portion of the WSA recommended suitable for wilderness designation. Development of any of these claims could adversely impact wilderness values within the study area. Because wilderness values are so significant, the suitability recommendation will preclude any further vehicular use of approximately ten miles of primitive access routes of travel.

Designation of this area as wilderness could also cause a potential conflict with the development of future communication and energy transmission facilities. The north boundary of this study area is within a utility corridor identified in both the CDCA Plan and the Western Regional Corridor Study (1980). Wilderness designation of the Bristol/Granite Mountains WSA would prohibit full development of the corridor.

The remaining acreage is recommended nonsuitable because: (1) the wilderness values are mediocre; (2) within the area, opportunities for mineral development exist; and (3) opportunities for vehicle-dependent recreation would be foregone under designation.

Within the nonsuitable area, geologic structures possessing high potential for the occurrence of perlite and sand and gravel, and moderate potential for gold and copper exist. In addition to these mineral resources, as of December, 1987, 61 mining claims have been located within this area,

encumbering 1,480 acres. Although this is a relatively low percentage of the entire WSA, any impacts caused by development of these claims or mineralized areas will effect a much more extensive area.

Throughout the nonsuitable area, previous recreational use has required the use of off-highway vehicles (OHV) for access. Primitive camping, OHV touring, hunting, and rockhounding are traditional activities in this area. Wilderness designation would virtually eliminate these activities. There are approximately 12 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. Public comments were received indicating that the western portion of this WSA is extensively used by rockhounds, searching for gems such as agates, jasper, sagenite, obsidian, chalcedony, calcite crystals, geodes and banded onyx. Loss of these family-oriented activities were given by many of those who commented on BLM's recommendation as reasons for recommending the area as nonsuitable.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	107,256
Split-estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		2,570
Private		9,826
Total		<u>119,652</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	43,232
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split-estate	(Private lands within the WSA boundaries in which the surface estate has been acquired since inventory-not in grand total) ¹	6,720
Split-estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>43,232</u>
Inholdings		
State		1,280
Private		35
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	64,024
Split-estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>64,024</u>

¹ Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The rugged terrain within the suitably recommended portion has allowed the area to retain its pristine condition. Within the nonsuitable area, the bajadas surrounding the Bristol and Old Dad Mountains contain impacts on natural values resulting from OHV use and mining activities.
2. Solitude: This is one of the few areas in the California Desert capable of absorbing hundreds of visitors engaged in primitive types of recreation without reaching the area's natural carrying capacity for solitude. Lush vegetation interspersed throughout the towering granite peaks provides excellent screening and unlimited opportunities for solitude within the WSA. The western portion of the study area is one of the most isolated portions of the CDCA.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Throughout the immense granite boulders containing lush cactus gardens and pinyon juniper woodlands, the desert recreationist will find abundant opportunities for primitive recreation within the WSA.
4. Special Features: Because this area offers a diverse range of habitats, many species occur here, that, while common elsewhere in California, are unique to the desert. Several of these species, outside of their normal range, have only been recorded in the Granite Mountains. Of the mammals, the desert shrew, Mexican free-tailed bat, and dusky-footed woodrat fall into this category. For example, the dusky-footed woodrat is considered strictly a coastal and Sierran species, but is found in the Granite Mountains.

An estimated 45 desert bighorn sheep, a BLM sensitive species, occupy the Granite Mountains range. One guzzler exists within the WSA to provide water for this herd. Based on the estimates of California Department of Fish and Game, the Granites support a mule deer herd numbering some 75 animals.

The desert tortoise occurs at densities approaching 20 per square mile over most of the bajada areas surrounding the mountains. Two isolated areas to the south and north show densities ranging between 20 and 50 per square mile. The tortoise is under status review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for possible listing as a threatened or endangered species.

The Granite Mountains exhibit a substantial archaeological record consisting of petroglyphs, pictographs, potsherds, and projectile points. More than 96 archaeological sites, including two villages, have been discovered. Perhaps the most exciting cultural sites in the Granites are the thirty known rock art sites—pictures painted onto or etched into rocks by unknown Native American artists. Desert Mojave and Chemehuevi Indians were the most recent native inhabitants.

The tremendous diversity of the Granite Mountains is reflected by its use for study purposes by educational institutions and nature study groups. The Kelso Basin, including the Granite Mountains, receives more use for these purposes than either Anza-Borrego Desert State Park or Joshua Tree National Monument. Twelve institutions regularly use the area.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 107,256 acres of the American Desert/Creosote bush (Larrea) as defined by Bailey and Kuchler. While this category is relatively ubiquitous throughout the California Desert, these mountains possess unique qualities not readily available elsewhere. Reflecting floral and faunal elements of the Great Basin, Sonoran and Mojave deserts, the Granites provide the setting for the study of the complex climatic regimes and associated biological interactions. The high elevations found in the Granite Mountains permit the development of extensive stands of single needle pinyon, Utah juniper, and oak woodlands relatively uncommon in most of the CDCA suitably recommended WSAs.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification <u>Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,160,653
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,546,849

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of eight major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of nine BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is located in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, approximately 50 miles south.

C. Manageability

The Bristol/Granite Mountains WSA is manageable as wilderness. Within the suitable portion, there are few issues that would complicate manageability. However, the unsuitable portion of this WSA would be more difficult to manage as wilderness.

The boundaries of the suitable area are irregular, delineated for much of their length by private land. These lands, unless acquired by BLM, will require posting and detailed mapping to be identifiable on the ground. Without extensive signing, inadvertent intrusions by motorized vehicles can occur causing degradation of wilderness features.

Within the suitable area, the development of mining claims will effect manageability. As of December, 1987, twelve mining claims were located

in the suitable portion of this WSA. Should any of these claims prove valid, development necessary and reasonably incidental to the mining operation would be allowed to continue after designation. Any significant development of these claims would result in a loss of wilderness values.

Two sections of land administered by the State of California, eleven sections of split-estate lands and roughly 40 acres of private land are recommended for acquisition and eventual designation as wilderness. Acquisition of these inholdings would enhance manageability by precluding the opportunity for the development of these parcels.

In the nonsuitable area, manageability is more complex. The boundary is more irregular and would require more signing and patrol. More mining claims have been located in the nonsuitable area; 61 claims as of December, 1987. And lastly, the area contains more private inholdings. Therefore, the complexities found in the suitable area are compounded manifold in the nonsuitable area, creating even more serious manageability problems.

One guzzler for desert bighorn sheep is located within the WSA. Maintenance of this guzzler is required approximately two times per year and normally involves mechanized equipment and vehicles to transport materials to the site.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Bristol/Granite Mountains WSA lies within the BLM Granite Mountains and Bristol Mountains Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Areas (GRAs). About a one square mile area of the WSA, consisting of alluvium, extends into the BLM Cady Mountains GRA. Mineral resource data in the G-E-M section of the wilderness portion of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) had not been fully analyzed, integrated, and interpreted during the recommendation process. However, the EIS did state that the WSA has known occurrence potential for iron, copper, lead and silver in the Granite Mountains and perlite and uranium in the Bristol Mountains. In addition, limestone and geothermal energy were indicated as having a potential in the WSA. As of December 1979, there were two unpatented mining claims recorded with the BLM in the WSA.

Mineral resource data for the WSA is contained in reports in the Granite Mountains and Bristol Mountains GRA files. In the report Granite Mountain Resource Survey (1979, Environmental Field Program, University of California at Santa Cruz, Publication No. 1), iron, lead, zinc, gold, silver and copper are reported in the Granite

Mountains. However, the GRA did not contain classification data. Most known metal deposits were noted in the report as occurring in the recommended suitable northeastern part of the WSA, in the Granite Mountains. The GRA file noted three mines in the suitable northeastern part of the WSA. These mines indicated a reasonable probability for the occurrence of copper, iron, lead, silver and gold. Data on the various mines and prospects found in report affirm that numerous metals occur in small quantities, without current interest. No production data were available in the report.

File data from the Bristol Mountains GRA classified one area at the south end of the Old Dad Mountains in the south-central portion of the WSA as having a moderate occurrence potential for gold and copper. This classification is thought to be based upon favorable geology, lineament data, and the occurrence of numerous quartz veins in granitic rock (See Map 2).

The Bristol Mountains GRA classified areas in the western portion of the WSA as having a high potential for the occurrence of perlite in the are recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. The perlite deposits occur in rhyolite breccia as irregular to lenticular bodies that range in thickness from a few feet up to 50 feet, and up to 1,000 feet in strike length. There is a large reserve of expansive perlite in this area but output has totaled only a few hundred tons from the Rust deposit, near the mid-south boundary of the WSA. The material was used for experimental purposes in the mid-1950's.

Three gamma-ray uranium anomalies occur along the south border of the WSA. GRA data considered the western two-thirds of WSA as being favorable for uranium, but did not classify the area for mineral occurrence potential. Two areas in the south and southwestern portions of the WSA are classified as having a high occurrence potential for sand and gravel along the south side of the WSA, north of Interstate Highway 40.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: Between 1981 and 1984, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) conducted mineral surveys of the suitable portion of the WSA, which included the Granite Mountains. The results of the mineral surveys were published in 1987 in USGS Bulletin 1712-C. The report indicated that there are metal mines and prospects along the eastern border of this WSA, but there has been little activity at these metallic occurrences and no production in the past 120 years.

The Comanche Mine and six prospects were noted in the report as lying within the recommended suitable northeastern portion of the WSA. According to USGS Bulletin, the Comanche Mine is located in a dolomitic roof pendant in northeast corner of the WSA. Roughly 60 tons of mineralized rock remains, averaging 2.5 percent copper,

0.3 ounces per ton silver, and greater than 30 percent iron. Other noted prospects in the USGS Bulletin were the Golden Legend Nos. 1 and 2, the Iron Victory Mine within the eastern boundary of the WSA, and the Silver Lode Mine just outside the eastern boundary of the WSA. The Iron Victory exposed a small skarn deposit of low grade iron containing about 110,000 tons of iron-rich rock averaging 47.2% iron. Silver, copper, lead and zinc minerals were noted as occurring in quartz veins in granite at the Silver Lode Mine. The USGS and BOM classified these areas as having a low mineral resource potential. However, based on known mineral occurrences and favorable geology, those areas in the portion of the WSA recommended suitable for wilderness designation classified by the USGS and BOM as having a low mineral potential, are classified under the BLM classification system as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, copper, zinc, and lead (refer to accompanying mineral potential map).

Tungsten appears in geochemical samples from skarn rich areas but has not been noted in outcrop. Therefore its occurrence potential is considered low under the BLM mineral classification system, and not shown on the accompanying map. Other small areas were indicated by the USGS and BOM to have a low mineral occurrence potential for iron, gold or perlite and they were also not plotted on the accompanying map.

There has been no interest or exploration for uranium in the WSA, therefore the occurrence potential for uranium is considered to be low based on favorable geologic environment only, without supporting occurrence information.

A review of the metal mines and prospects listed in the 1980 GRA portion of the CDCA EIS (Volume G, Appendix XIV) showed no occurrences in the WSA. In addition there were only two mines plotted in the most recent California Division of Mines, County Report for San Bernardino County (Wright, L.A. et al, 1953, Mines and Mineral Resources of San Bernardino County, California, Journal of Mines and Geology, Vol. 49). These were the Rust perlite deposits in the mid south, and the Iron Victory iron mine in northeast part of the WSA.

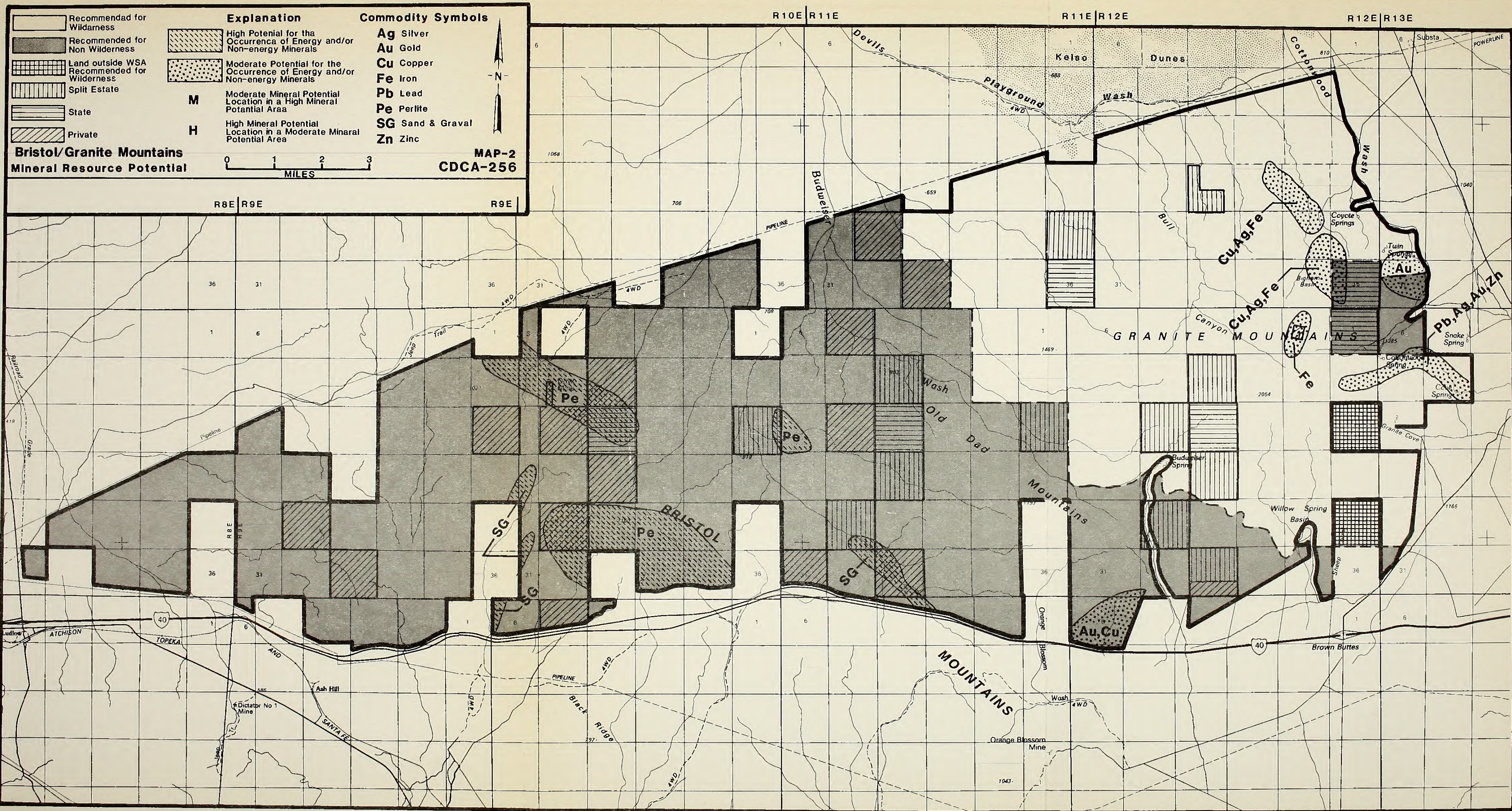
As of December, 1987 there were no current mining exploration plans of operation. Forty-eight of the lode claims and thirteen placer claims are located in the part of the WSA recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation in the vicinity of the perlite occurrence. Twelve placer claims are located in the extreme northeastern corner of the portion of the study area recommended suitable for wilderness designation. Unpatented mining claims are summarized in the following table taken from BLM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	0	48	48	0	960	960
Placer	12	13	25	480	520	1,000
Mill Site	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	12	61	73	480	1,480	1,960

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: In the suitable portion of the WSA, wilderness values will be maintained. However, any development of valid mining claims will adversely affect wilderness values in site-specific areas. In the nonsuitable portion, mineral development could cause localized impacts to wilderness values. Opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined types of recreation will be adversely impacted along designated routes of travel by the continued use of off-highway vehicles. In the nonsuitable area, approximately ten miles of routes will remain open.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: The proposed action will cause significant adverse impacts to this activity in the suitable portion of the WSA allowing only existing mining claims with valid rights to be developed. In the nonsuitable area, exploration and development of mineral resources will be allowed to continue, subject to the regulations stated in 43 CFR 3809 regarding surface disturbance, as well as any additional constraints stated in the CDCA Plan.
3. Impact on Saleable Mineral Exploration and Development: The extraction of saleable materials is a discretionary action and any authorization will be discouraged within the EMNSA.
4. Impact on Grazing: Because grazing is a grandfathered use, it will be allowed to continue in designated wilderness areas.
5. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep Habitat: The bighorn sheep habitat, located in the Granite Mountains, will be maintained in its current condition. No impact to individual animals is expected.
6. Impact on Desert Tortoise Habitat: Habitat located in the suitable area will remain in its present condition. In the nonsuitable area, desert tortoise habitat will suffer localized adverse impacts from the development of mineral resources. Individual animals will occasionally be disturbed by human intrusions.



7. Impact on Cultural Resources: Those sites located in the suitable area will enjoy increased protection under the proposed action. Designation of the area will result in slight adverse impacts because study of these sites will be hindered by the restrictions placed on the use of mechanized equipment. In the unsuitable area, existing Federal laws and BLM guidelines, as listed in the CDCA Plan, will protect these resources by requiring extensive mitigation of any impacts caused by mineral development.
8. Impact on Utility Corridors: Constraints will exist on expansion of these facilities independent of wilderness designation. An amendment to the CDCA and EMNSA Plans is required prior to any authorization to expand facilities within the area identified by the State as an energy/transmission utility corridor.
9. Impact on Research and Study Activities: Activities requiring motorized vehicles for access will be reduced somewhat in the 40% of the WSA proposed for wilderness designation. Within the 60% recommended unsuitable, activities can continue based on guidelines established in the CDCA and EMNSA Plans.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Comments were varied, referring to the ecological importance of the Granite Mountains, specific mining areas and access roads, recreational interests by rockhounding groups, and potential for minerals and energy. Boundary changes were made wherever road and mining activities degraded potential wilderness quality.
2. Study Phase: Of the 40 letters received on this WSA, about three-quarters favored multiple use over further study as a wilderness area. Current uses which respondents wanted to continue in the area were grazing, vehicle related recreation, and mineral exploration and development. Within the area there are 4,483 acres leased for grazing. Access is needed for range management. Vehicle related recreation includes four-wheel drive travel, driving for pleasure, motorcycle trail riding, and dune running. Vehicles were also needed for access for rockhounding, hunting, mining, photography,

hiking, and camping, due to the size and the extreme heat of the area. Rockhounds were especially in need of access to the western end of the WSA and listed agates, jasper, sagenite, obsidian, chalcedony, calcite crystals, geodes, banded onyx, and other gems found here. Mining concerns cited the potential for iron, copper, titanium, boron, phosphates, various salts, limestone, building stone, sand, and gravel. Some existing mines require access which would be precluded under WSA designation. Geothermal potential in the western part of the WSA was addressed.

Some opponents of wilderness mentioned the large percent of interspersed private land throughout the WSA. Utility companies requested buffers alongside pipelines and other utilities and access for maintenance. Sights and sounds which make the area inappropriate for wilderness or which require boundary adjustments of one mile or more include power lines, Interstate 40, low-flying military aircraft, and vehicles using trails and ways for the purposes mentioned above.

Supporters of wilderness designation mentioned the extensive use of the area for scientific and ecological research and education. The unique geology of the area was noted; the Granite Mountains Pediment has been suggested for Natural Landmark status. The scenic qualities of the Granite Mountains and adjoining bajada, the spacious vistas and varied vegetation were mentioned, including the pinyon forests, yucca-cholla association, Pinus monophylla, Juniperus, and rare Penstemon stephensii. Many archaeological sites are present, including 30 known rock art sites, one believed to be 10,000 years old. Opportunities for hiking, nature study, and other types of primitive recreation are features which make this an outstanding wilderness area. The suggestion was made to close access to Sheep Corral and Budweiser Spring in order to protect values in these locations. One writer wanted to include Dornier's Camp and Snake Spring within the WSA.

Numerous comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). Recommendations included a 100 foot easement for Southern California Gas Company pipelines, joint management of a site for "non wilderness activities" by the BLM and the University of California. Other comments stated that there is too much private land in the WSA for wilderness consideration. Opposite opinions recommended boundary adjustment and expansion to enhance wilderness.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: A variety of public comments specific to this WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. One indicated agreement with the Protection Alternative. Another expressed concurrence with the Balanced Alternative, while a third favored wilderness with improved vehicle access through "cherry systems." Another called for recommending more land as suitable than was

recommended in the Protection Alternative. One respondent stated that the exploration for and development of oil, gas, and geothermal resources, under the No Action Alternative, were the best uses for the study area.

The National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups, recommended that the entire WSA be designated unsuitable, with the Granite Mountains Class L (limited use), the western portion Class I (intensive use) and the remainder Class M (medium use). A large number of club members sent in printed coupons or letters supporting this position. Conservation oriented organizations urged that the WSA be designated suitable.

4. Proposed Plan: Comments and positions of special interest groups were similar to those described above.

No comments were received from local governments.

APPENDIX 1
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION
BRISTOL/GRANITE MOUNTAINS WSA (CDCA-256)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				TOTAL ACREAGE	NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	
	TWNSHP	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN			SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)
1	9N.	12E.	2	SBM	40	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	4.0	2.5
2	9N.	12E.	16	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
3	10N.	11E.	36	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0

These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.

Lava Hills

CDCA 258

LAVA HILLS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-258)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 34,263 acres

The Lava Hills WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the central portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). Ludlow, California located 12 miles west is the closest community. The WSA includes 23,141 acres of public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1,398 acres of State land, and 9,724 acres of private land (see Map 1 and Table 1).

WSA boundaries include a gas pipeline right-of-way on the north and south, and a maintained road from Bagdad to the gas pipeline road on the east. The western boundary follows a series of topographical features, section lines, and portions of a graded dirt road running from the railroad siding of Siberia, five miles northeast to the gas pipeline right-of-way.

The WSA contains the Lava Hills, the Black Ridge Mountains and the bajadas of Bagdad Valley. The Lava Hills and Black Ridge Mountains consist of a fairly large mass of mostly rounded hills. The landform of Bagdad Valley consists of low bajadas sweeping down from the surrounding hills. In many places, these bajadas are covered by dark, varnished desert pavement. The vegetation of this WSA is widely scattered and consists primarily of creosote bush scrub and desert wash scrub.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 0 acres recommended for wilderness 23,141 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

While the WSA did meet the 2(c) wilderness criteria as defined in the Wilderness Act of 1964, the area does not possess any distinct features or resources that are not available in the surrounding California Desert. The area's marginal wilderness values do not outweigh the value of the area's

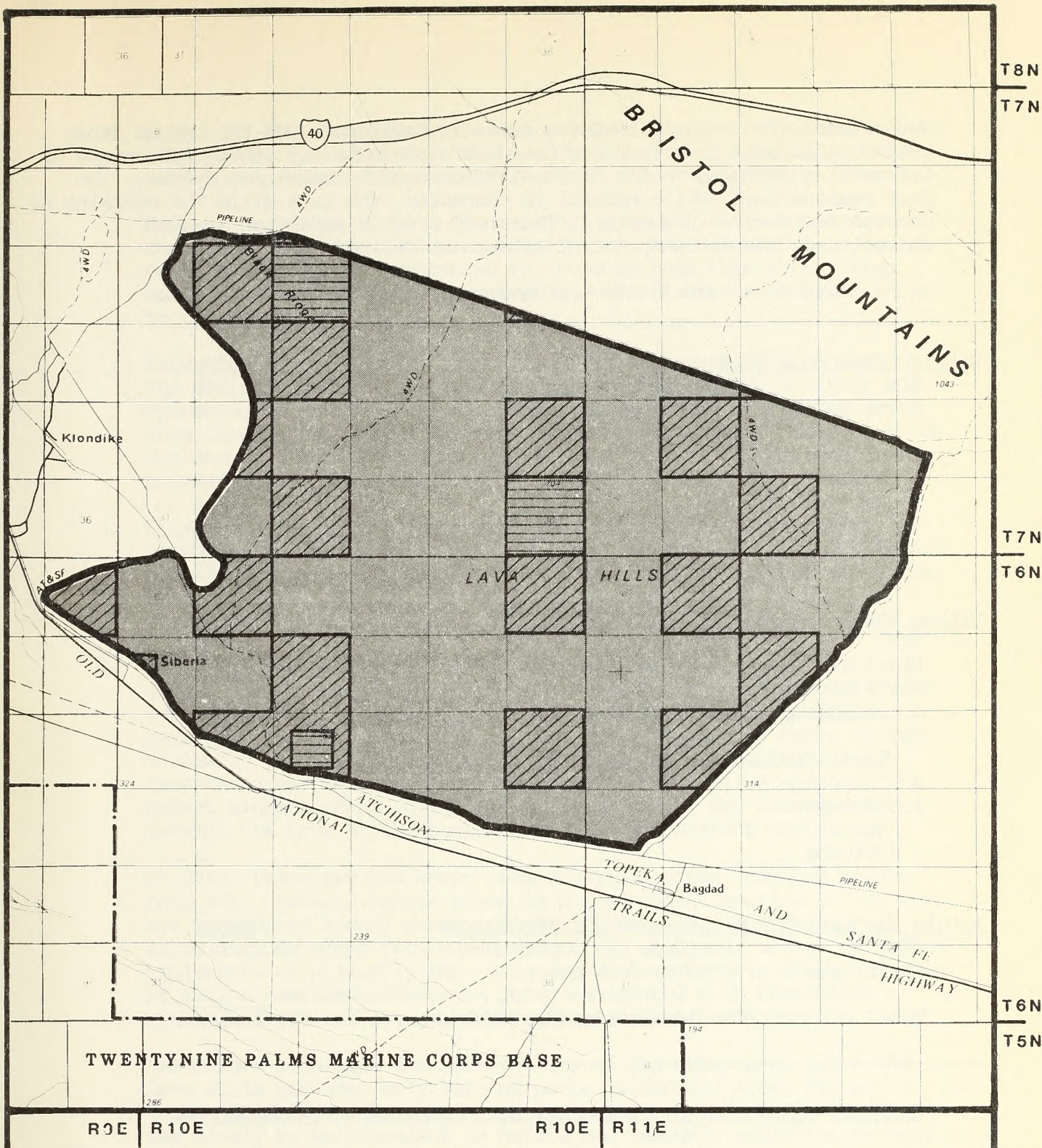
other resources, specifically mineral values, opportunities to extract sand and gravel, and opportunities for motorized recreation.

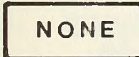






Mineralization exists in localized pockets within the WSA. Copper was mined in the early 1900s and current geologic data suggests a moderate potential for the occurrence of copper and gold mineral resources near the northern boundary. A high occurrence potential for cinders exists in the southwestern portion of the study area. There are approximately 15 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. Within the Lava Hills WSA, there is a moderate demand for motorized vehicle access. Routes of travel into the WSA are utilized by Atchison-Topeka-Santa Fe Railroad, Southern California Gas Company, and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to access materials needed for flood control, diversion dikes, highway and facility maintenance projects. Adjacent to the northwest corner, Caltrans has established a borrow pit to acquire sand and gravel for resurfacing of Interstate 40. Similar sites exist within the WSA, but were not authorized during the interim phases of wilderness management.

Vehicle travel in the WSA is also associated with light recreational use for hunting, off-highway vehicle (OHV) touring, and rockhounding. Most recreational use is generated from the Los Angeles basin and local desert communities as the WSA's proximity is ideal for weekend use visits. The WSA is well advertised in rock and gem publications and numerous groups frequent the area to collect obsidian, red and yellow moss jasper, and chalcedony roses. Although some hiking and backpacking does occur, such use is generally restricted to the winter and spring months since during summer and fall, limited water supplies and high temperatures are likely to be encountered.

Designating the study area as wilderness creates a potential conflict with the development of future communication and energy transmission facilities. Both the north and south boundaries are within utility corridors identified in both the CDCA Plan and the Western Regional Corridor Study (1980). These corridors have not reached development capacity although many of the other 16 corridors identified in the CDCA Plan are nearing build-out. Wilderness designation of the Lava Hills WSA would prohibit full development of these corridors, forcing installation of new energy transmission lines in other corridors or in areas not previously disturbed. Depending upon which WSAs are ultimately designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may be constraints placed upon the long-term energy and communication transmission capabilities in the southwestern United States.

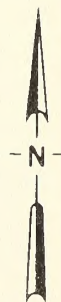
The area possesses only marginal wilderness values. Naturalness has been reduced by a number of vehicle ways which traverse the WSA. Solitude is impacted by outside sights and sounds associated with traffic on nearby Interstate 40, trains passing on the railroad track south of the WSA, and the proximity of military exercises in the Twentynine Palms Marine Corp Base. Within the Lava Hills WSA, nature has created a desolate environment, virtually empty of interesting or unique features.



- | | | | |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
|  | NONE |  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | STATE |
| | |  | PRIVATE |

**Lava Hills
Proposal
MAP-1**

0 1 2 3
MILES



CDCA-258
JUNE, 1988

When viewed with other wilderness areas in California and throughout other states, this area as wilderness does not contribute any additional unique or interesting features to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The fact remains that, while natural in character, the Lava Hills WSA contains no unusual features or resources. The study area is merely an area of undeveloped Federal land, not of wilderness caliber.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	23,141
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		1,398
Private		9,724
Total		<u>34,263</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	23,141
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>23,141</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Although the area has been affected primarily by natural forces with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable, numerous ways and jeep trails penetrate the WSA from all boundaries. These ways are currently utilized by rockhounds, hunters and OHV enthusiasts.

2. Solitude: Some opportunities for solitude are available within the WSA, primarily in the Lava Hills. The ruggedness of the mountains tend to topographically screen visitors from one another.

However, outside sights and sounds detrimentally affect solitude throughout the area. These intrusions include noise from the vehicles driving on Interstate 40, located less than three miles north, and noise from trains passing on the Santa Fe railroad tracks to the south.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities for hiking, rockhounding, and camping are available, enhanced by the lack of any noticeable man-made intrusions and the perception of open space the area provides. Extreme temperatures throughout most of the year limit use to the short, cool weather season.
4. Special Features: About 10,000 acres of the WSA contain fairly decent desert tortoise habitat with population densities of 20 to 50 per square mile. In California, the desert tortoise (Gopherus agassizi) is a BLM sensitive species and is currently under status review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for listing as a threatened species. Another California BLM sensitive species, the desert bighorn sheep (Ovis canadensis nelsoni), may occasionally inhabit the Lava Hills, however, only on a transient basis.

To date, there are two known archaeological sites recorded within this WSA. Several square miles in the northeast portion of the area are considered highly sensitive/significant. Known prehistoric sites include stone tool workshops, flake scatters, cores, and stone implements of primarily rhyolitic material. The Lava Hills are also of Native American concern in being associated with Chemehuevi mythic beliefs and as a natural resource. The Serrano and

Chemehuevi both made intermittent use of the study area since the Lava Hills provided only limited water collection after rains. Though utilized rock shelters may be present, prehistoric land use was likely to be transient in nature and resource exploitation only intermittent.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 23,141 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush (Larrea) ecosystem. This ecosystem is widespread throughout the California Desert and is currently

represented within the NWPS. Landforms present within the WSA are not unique to this region or to the California Desert. Geologic features within are typical of formations common throughout the surrounding deserts.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,244,768
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,630,964

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers:
The WSA is within a five-hour drive of eight major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,464

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of ten BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is located within Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, located roughly 50 miles south.

C. Manageability

The Lava Hills WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, based upon past and current uses, manageability would be difficult. The lack of topographical features on the east, west and south, along with the numerous ways and washes penetrating the WSA boundaries, allow two-wheel drive access to many areas in the WSA. Each of these routes would have to be signed and/or blocked so as to provide an easily identifiable border to prevent vehicle intrusions.

The WSA's proximity to the Los Angeles basin also complicates management because recreationists have had a long history of motorized recreational use of the area. Long-term use patterns may be difficult to reverse. Management of the area to protect wilderness values would require a significant commitment of manpower to adequately ensure the area's integrity.

Roughly 30% of the entire study area consists of private and State owned inholdings. This private land creates a management problem in that any development would affect the wilderness values on the surrounding public land. Acquisition of these inholdings would be required to ensure the integrity of the unit. However, the cost of acquisition of the land would far exceed the intrinsic value of these lands as wilderness since their wilderness characteristics are so marginal.

Despite any BLM management efforts, outside sights and sounds will continue to intrude into the area, lessening the wilderness experience to be had within. This WSA is within three miles of Interstate 40 which carries a continual stream of traffic. The sound of the passing cars and trucks can be heard throughout much of the area. To the south, the Santa Fe railroad line passes within a quarter mile of the study area. Trains pass by on these tracks each day, visible and audible to WSA visitors.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Lava Hills WSA (CDCA-258) is located in the BLM Bristol Mountains Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The G-E-M resource data for this WSA was not complete and had not been fully examined and analyzed at the time

the area was being studied, therefore, the interpretations set forth regarding mineral resources were preliminary. However, the EIS report did indicate that the WSA had possible potential for metals, geothermal energy, and cinders.

The GRA file data showed one area in the northeastern corner of the WSA classified as having a moderate occurrence potential for copper and gold. A high occurrence potential for volcanic cinders exists at one locality in the southwestern part of the WSA as shown on Map 2. The GRA identified an area possessing low occurrence potential for construction rip-rap or road fill from the Lava Hills in the middle of the WSA.

GRA file data shows an evaluation (unclassified) for a geothermal resource in the northwestern part of the WSA in the valley between Bristol Hills and Lava Hills to the south. In 1976, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) classified the southwestern corner of the WSA as a Potential Geothermal Area (PGA).

The GRA file did not classify any other mineral resources in the WSA. Bureau records show that 28 unpatented mining claims were on record in this WSA as of December, 1979.

Support for the GRA moderate copper classification in the WSA is indicated by the description of the Winifred copper prospect group in the northeastern part of the WSA by the California Division of Mines County Report for San Bernardino County (Wright, L.A. et al., 1953, Journal of Mines and Geology, Vol. 49). This summary indicated that a small tonnage of copper ore, reportedly assayed at 12% copper with high gold content, occurred in a granitic host rock with similar geology in the GRA classified area. The ore was shipped prior to 1919 and the mine has been idle since. The report also shows two copper mines outside the northeast border of the WSA in a similar geologic environment. Both these copper mines were reported to have had rich copper-gold ore with small production.

The only other mine listed in the vicinity of this WSA in the San Bernardino County Report was Dish Hill volcanic cinders outside the south boundary, near Trojan Siding, where a small tonnage of volcanic cinders were mined for aggregate in plaster.

The 1980 GRA file data reported a 50% probability for the occurrence of tungsten in the middle of the WSA but there is no evidence other than a favorable geologic environment to consider this more than a low occurrence potential.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Decision: No USGS or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys were conducted in the WSA because it is recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation.

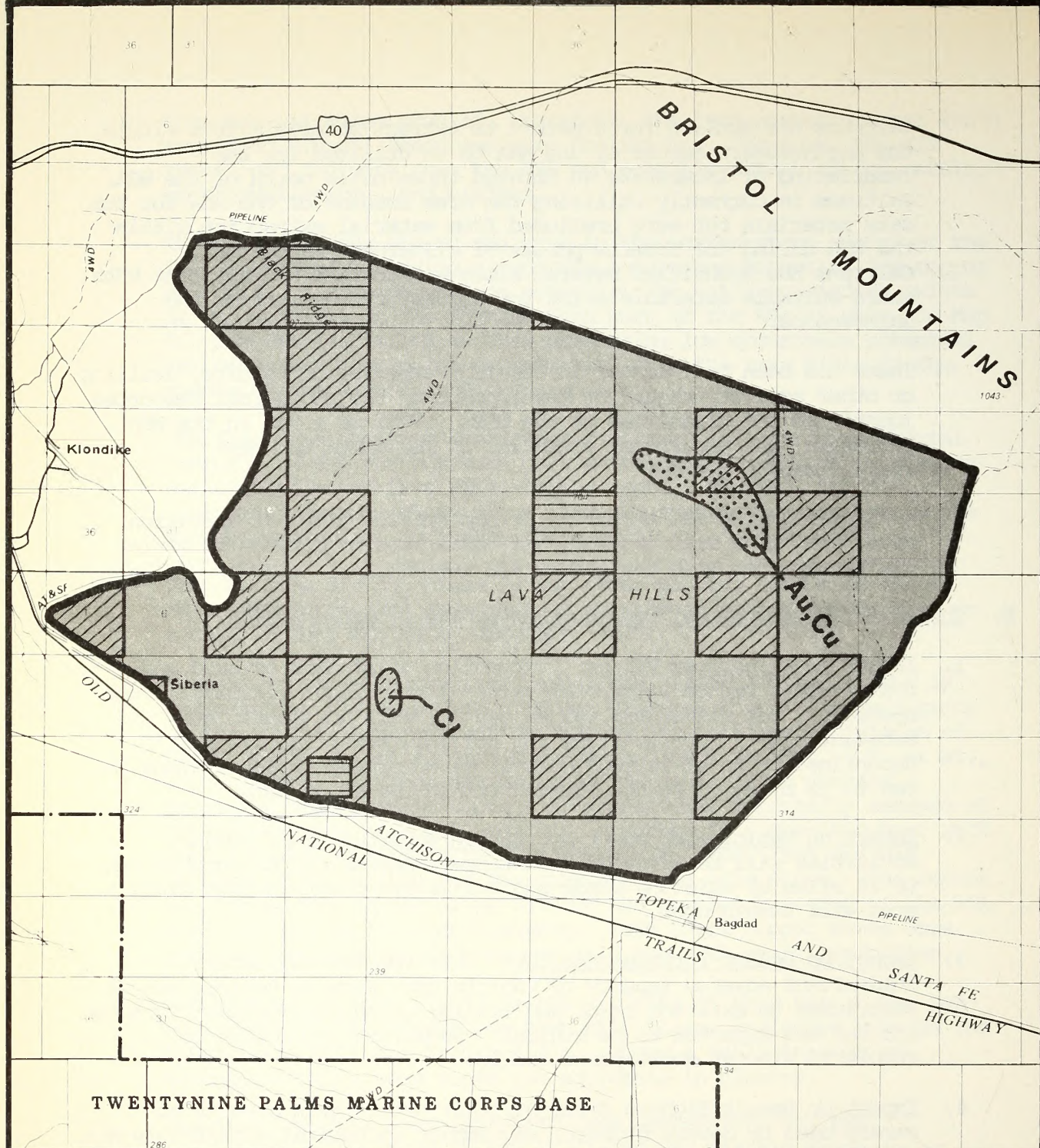
Caltrans has applied for a permit to extract materials from within the northwestern corner of the WSA to be utilized for the resurfacing of Interstate 40 located three miles north of the WSA. Caltrans is currently utilizing the area outside of the WSA for the same materials but were precluded from material extraction within the WSA during the interim phases of wilderness management. Caltrans has identified several sites within this and adjacent WSAs where suitable materials exist for highway reconstruction and maintenance.

There has been no interest in leasing, exploration permits, drilling or other activity regarding development of the geothermal resources identified and classified by the USGS (1976) as a PGA in the WSA. Therefore, the occurrence potential is low under the BLM classification system.

As of January, 1988, no mining or exploration plans of operation have been filed with the BLM, and there were no unpatented mining claims recorded with the BLM within the WSA.

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action


1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Extraction of cinders or sand and gravel would reduce wilderness values in the local vicinity of the operation, but wilderness values overall will not depreciate substantially. Opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation will be adversely impacted along the ten to 15 miles of routes located within the study area.
2. Impact on Vehicle-Dependent Recreation Opportunities: These activities will be allowed to continue. Access on the roughly ten to 15 miles of existing roads and trails found within this study area will remain open.
3. Impact on Desert Tortoise/Habitat: This species may suffer inadvertent adverse impacts by vehicle use. Because vehicle use is restricted to existing roads and trails, encounters between tortoise and man are expected to be minimal. Some loss of habitat will result if mineral development occurs.
4. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep/Habitat: Since this area is so rarely used by desert bighorn, any impact to habitat within this WSA would cause only negligible impacts to the viability of the herd.
5. Impact on Cultural Resources: All proposed surface disturbing activities will be subjected to environmental analysis to detect and allow for the salvage of any cultural resources that would be impacted.




T8N
T7N
T7N
T6N
T6N
T5N

Lava Hills
Mineral Resource Potential

Explanation

 High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals

 Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals

M Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area

H High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

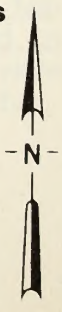
0 1 2 3
MILES

Commodity Symbols

Au Gold

CI Cinders

Cu Copper



MAP-2
CDCA-258

6. Impact on Native American Values: Native American access to traditional religious sites will remain available. Some sacred features such as mountain peaks or water sources will be subject to administrative protection under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Any changes to the physical appearance of natural features will be approved only with the concurrence of the affected Native American group.
7. Impact on Utility Corridors: The proposed action will allow full development of the existing energy and communication transmission corridors, consistent with CDCA Plan guidelines.
8. Impact on Mineral Exploration and Development: Mineral exploration and development will be allowed to continue, subject to the regulations stated in 43 CFR 3809 regarding surface disturbance, as well as any additional constraints stated in the CDCA Plan. This includes extraction of cinders and sand and gravel for maintenance and construction purposes.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Most comments supported the findings. Some changes were made reflecting specific information received on roads and man-made features.
2. Study Phase: Nineteen comments were received on this WSA. Ten favored further wilderness consideration, while nine preferred to continue multiple use management. Proponents of further wilderness consideration noted the roadless, pristine condition of the unit, its stark scenery, and its diverse terrain, which provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The educational value of the volcanic chain for students of geology was noted. The area's craters were said to be the best preserved in the desert. One letter mentioned the area's vegetation, including desert lavender, catsclaw, rabbit brush, and smoke trees.

Opponents of wilderness were mostly rockhounds who wanted to maintain access to a rock collecting site near Bagdad. Two letters mentioned the potential for oil, gas, and geothermal resources and the need to have access for exploration and development. A letter

from the Marine Base at Twentynine Palms requested withdrawal of this area from further study because it would be subject to the noise of military jet aircraft and the noise and tremors caused by exploding ordnance. Other features which could detract from wilderness quality were sounds of trains running alongside the southern boundary, a transmission line, two noisy pumping stations, and a high percentage of privately owned land.

Five letters and a 51 signature petition were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). All favored continued multiple use management of the area due to their interest in rock collecting. One of the letters was from the Marine Corps Base at Twentynine Palms; it mentioned, again, the dangers of noise from military aircraft and exploding ordnance.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were few comments specific to this WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this was one of the many WSAs opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in letters and printed coupons supporting multiple use classification of moderate use for this area. This was in agreement with both the Use Alternative and the Balanced Alternative. Conservation oriented groups and individuals preferred the Protection Alternative which recommended limited use for the area, or else asked for a wilderness designation. The same respondent again asked for a classification which would allow exploration for oil, gas, and geothermal resources.
4. Proposed Plan: There were few specific comments of this WSA in response to the Proposed Plan which recommended limited use for the unit. This classification was satisfactory for most of the conservation groups but was opposed by vehicle-oriented groups which wanted more access for rock collecting.

No comments were received from local governments.

South Bristol Mountains

CDCA 258A

SOUTH BRISTOL MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-258A)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 37,761 acres

The South Bristol Mountains WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the central portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). Ludlow, California, located 25 miles west, is the closest community. The WSA includes 27,056 acres of public land, administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 892 acres of State land and 9,813 acres of private land (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The wilderness study area is bordered on the south by a gas pipeline right-of-way and maintenance road, except for a cherrystemmed access road leading to an abandoned mining area, approximately two miles within the study area. On the west, the boundary is delineated by an old mining road, and on the north by another pipeline maintenance road. The eastern boundary, avoiding areas of surface disturbance, generally follows the alignment of Kelbaker Road (Kelso-Amboy Road) for much of the way, then detours, again to avoid areas of surface disturbance, and follows the topography of the southernmost portion of the Bristol Mountains. Approximately 15% of the WSA is non-public land running in north-south strips of alternating sections.

The WSA contains the southern terminus of the Bristol Mountains and the bajadas which surround them on the west and east. The mountains are steep and rugged and their reddish-brown colors contrast with the grays and whites of the sloping bajadas. The highest peak is 2883 feet above sea level and the lowest elevation within the WSA is approximately 760 feet above sea level. Creosote bush scrub and desert wash scrub are the dominant vegetation associations in this WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Various suitability recommendations were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS. Only the no wilderness recommendation was analyzed for the WSA in the EIS. The all wilderness option was eliminated from further consideration during the scoping process.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE --- 0 acres recommended for wilderness
27,056 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

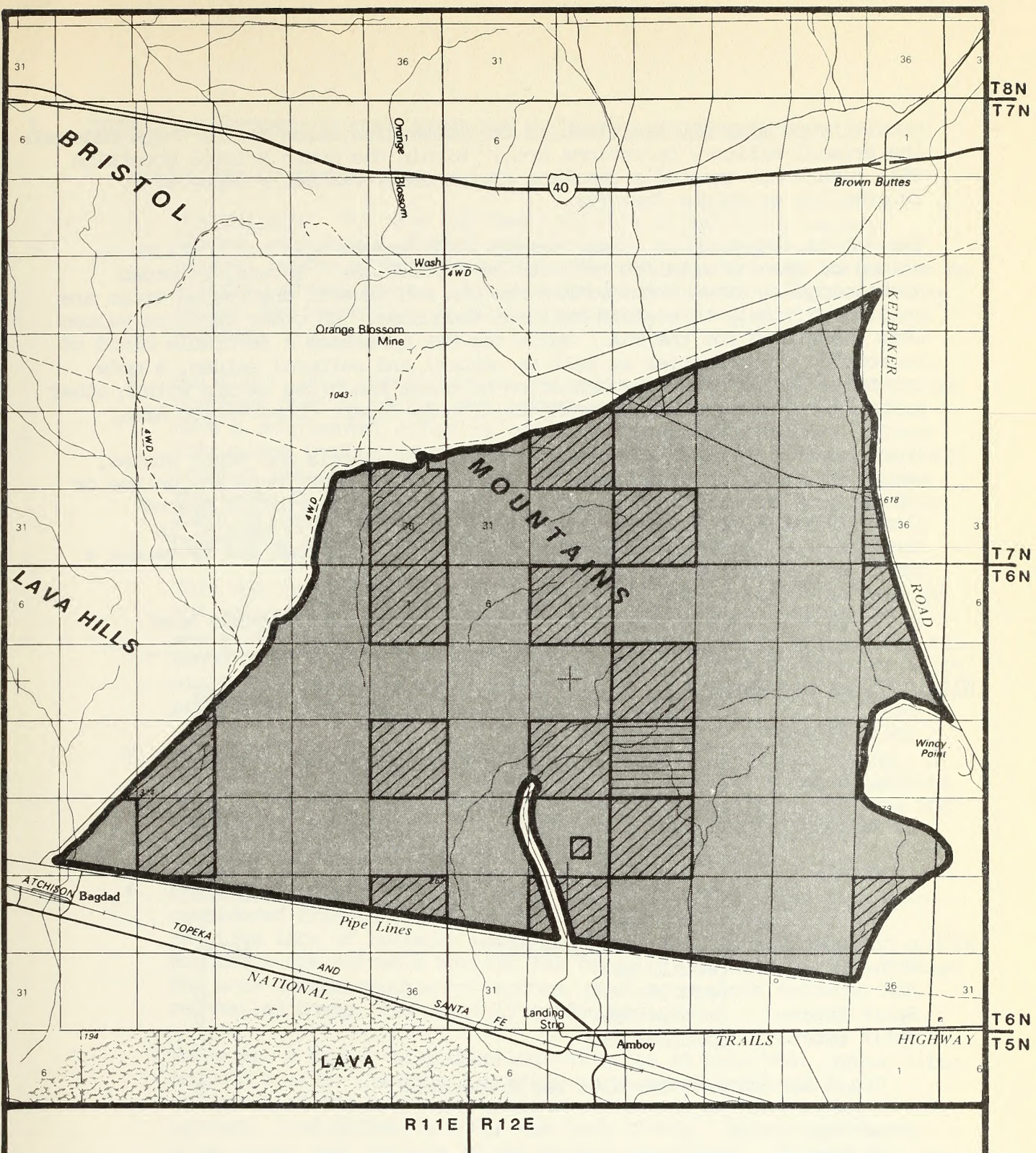
While the area possesses wilderness qualities that adequately met the Section 2(c) criteria outlined in the 1964 Wilderness Act, these values are only marginal and were not sufficient to outweigh the value of the area's other resources, specifically the opportunities for vehicle-dependent recreation and the opportunities for mineral resource exploration and development. In addition, designation of this area would conflict with the development of two utility corridors along the WSA's borders.

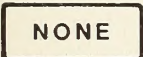


Presently, there is a demand for motorized vehicle access into the South Bristol Mountains WSA. There are approximately ten miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. Vehicular travel in the WSA is associated with light recreational use for hunting, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) touring. Portions of the WSA have a moderate potential for the occurrence of limestone. During the past several years the South Bristol Mountains have been the subject of periodic geothermal exploration by Phillips Petroleum. Wilderness designation would preclude many of these activities.



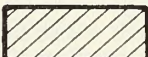
Should the study area be designated as wilderness, a potential conflict arises with the development of future communication and energy transmission facilities. Both the north and south boundaries of this area are within utility corridors identified in both the CDCA Plan and the Western Regional Corridor Study (1980). These corridors have not reached development capacity although many of the other 16 corridors identified in the CDCA Plan are nearing build-out. Wilderness designation of the South Bristol Mountains WSA would prohibit full development of these corridors, forcing installation of new energy transmission lines in other corridors or in areas not previously disturbed. Depending upon which WSAs are ultimately designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may be constraints placed upon the long term energy and communication transmission capabilities in the southwestern United States.

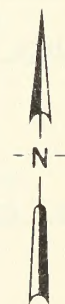
This area contains extensive private inholdings, comprising roughly 25% of the entire WSA. Future development of these parcels must be consistent with the Consolidated General Plan of San Bernardino County which has designated this area as "Rural Conservation 40." This designation allows parcels as small as 40 acres. Although development of this area is not anticipated for many years, should any of the myriad of development scenarios allowed in the County's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance occur, it will have long lasting adverse affects on this area's wilderness values.

The area possesses only marginal wilderness values. Naturalness has been reduced by a number of vehicle ways which traverse the WSA. Solitude is impacted by outside sights and sounds associated with traffic on nearby Interstate 40, trains passing on the railroad track south of the WSA, and the



- | | |
|---|---|
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
|  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | STATE |
|  | PRIVATE |



**South Bristol Mountains
Proposal
MAP-1**

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-258A
JUNE, 1988

proximity of military exercises in the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base and the Bristol Military Operations Area. Within the South Bristol Mountains WSA, nature has created a desolate environment, virtually empty of interesting or unique features.

The WSA is comprised of common desert plant assemblages and contains no unique or special wildlife habitats or populations. Several recorded archaeological sites occur within the WSA and several unsurveyed areas are considered likely to contain cultural resources. No other resource values were identified for the WSA. While the WSA possesses a favorable blend of recreation opportunities as well as natural and cultural values, a more extensive and diverse representation of these resources exists within other suitably recommended WSA's in the California Desert Conservation Area.

When compared to other wilderness areas in California and other states, designation of this area as wilderness would not contribute any unique or interesting features to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Although the South Bristol Mountains WSA essentially is natural in character, it possesses no unusual features or resources and is merely a tract of undeveloped Federal land.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	27,056
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		892
Private		9,813
Total		<u>37,761</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	27,056
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>27,056</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area has been affected primarily by natural forces, with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable. However, several routes of travel occur in the WSA, constructed for access to historic mining sites. Repeated use by motorized vehicles seeking access for recreation or mineral exploration have kept these ways visible.
2. Solitude: Some opportunities for solitude are available within the northern portion of the WSA. However, outside sights and sounds have a detrimental effect on solitude throughout the area. These intrusions include noise from the vehicles driving on Interstate 40, located less than three miles north, noise from trains passing on the Santa Fe Railroad tracks to the south, and noise from the low-level military overflights occurring in the Bristol Military Operations Area which encompasses this WSA.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities for hiking, nature study, and similar activities are available in the WSA. The lack of any noticeable man-made intrusions allows for primitive and unconfined recreation. The ruggedness of the mountains tends to topographically screen visitors from one another.
4. Special Features: Traditionally, the Bristol Mountains have been considered transient bighorn sheep ranges due primarily to a relative lack of reliable water sources. The South Bristol Mountains are suitable habitat for foraging and nesting for at least the more common species of raptors, such as prairie falcons, red-tailed hawks, and possibly golden eagles.

There are a number of archaeological sites in this WSA. Known sites include a major Chemehuevi trading route through the valley southwest of the Bristol Mountains. This was an area employed for seasonal food gathering until the late 1930's. Aboriginal burial sites occur near springs in the Bristol Mountains. These areas are sacred to present-day Native Americans. The Bristol Mountains themselves are an area of mythic association to the Chemehuevi.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 27,056 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush (Larrea) ecosystem. This province is

widespread throughout the California Desert and is currently represented within the National Wilderness Preservation System. Landforms present within the WSA are not unique to this region or to the California Desert. Geologic features within are typical of formations common throughout the surrounding deserts.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	NWPS Areas		Other BIM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,240,853
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,627,049

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of eight major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BIM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS areas		Other BIM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
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Visalia-Tulare-Porterville	34	4,431,635	61	1,681,921
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of nine BIM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness areas are located in Joshua Tree National Monument, located 40 miles south.

C. Manageability

The South Bristol Mountains WSA is manageable as wilderness. There are, however, several issues that would complicate manageability.

Although vehicle travel along the bajadas has not been a major problem, such use could arise should the area become designated as wilderness and visitor use levels increase. These bajadas extend for several miles on three sides of the mountainous terrain. However, it appears that signing and/or installation of barriers, non-wilderness buffers, or other impediments to vehicle travel would be effective in reducing unauthorized intrusions and identifying boundaries. Additional patrol and surveillance measures would be required to ensure that the area's wilderness qualities are preserved.

Roughly 25% of the entire study area consists of private and State owned inholdings. This private land creates a management problem in that any development on these sections would affect the wilderness values on the surrounding public land. Appropriate development of private land is determined by the County of San Bernardino. In this area, the County's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance allow a wide variety of development scenarios ranging from residential to commercial. Acquisition of these inholdings would be required to ensure the integrity of the unit.

Despite any BLM management efforts, outside sights and sounds will continue to intrude into the area, lessening the wilderness experience. This WSA is within three miles of Interstate 40 which carries a continual stream of traffic. The sound of the passing cars and trucks can be heard throughout much of the area. To the south, the Santa Fe Railroad line passes within a quarter mile of the study area. Trains pass by on these tracks each day, visible and audible to WSA visitors.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The South Bristol Mountains WSA is located in the Bristol Mountains Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The G-E-M resource data for this WSA was not fully analyzed, integrated and interpreted at the time of the recommendation process. The EIS indicated that mineral resource information was not complete and interpretations made were based on a brief review of the available information. However, G-E-M data in the EIS stated that the WSA had potential for limestone, gold, iron, geothermal energy, uranium and thorium. Bureau records show that no claims were on record in the WSA as of December, 1979.

GRA data in 1980 indicated a low occurrence potential for uranium surrounding the Hope Uranium Mine which lies outside the southeastern boundary of this WSA. There could be a possibility for

uranium mineralization within the WSA adjacent to the Hope Mine, but any deposit would be very small and localized and would not attract mineral interest. In any case, data were insufficient to classify the area for uranium resource potential. There is a low occurrence potential for iron, uranium and copper, indicated by the GRA file, in the central part of the WSA. The uranium potential is supported by airborne gamma-ray anomaly, and the potential for iron and copper was determined on the basis of favorable geology which consists of a large outcropping of Mesozoic granitic rock, locally in contact with limestone.

Limestone outcrops or locations are noted in the GRA file in the south-central and southeastern portions of the WSA in the areas of Precambrian rock formations. According to the GRA report, the limestone and dolomite are interbedded, extensively exposed, and strongly folded. In the south-central portion of the WSA, the limestone has been quarried, to a limited extent, in an area cherry-stemmed from the WSA inventory unit. The areas containing limestone deposits were classified in the GRA as having a moderate potential for occurrence. Map 2 identifies the mineral resource potential for the WSA.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Decision: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys were conducted in this WSA because it is recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation.

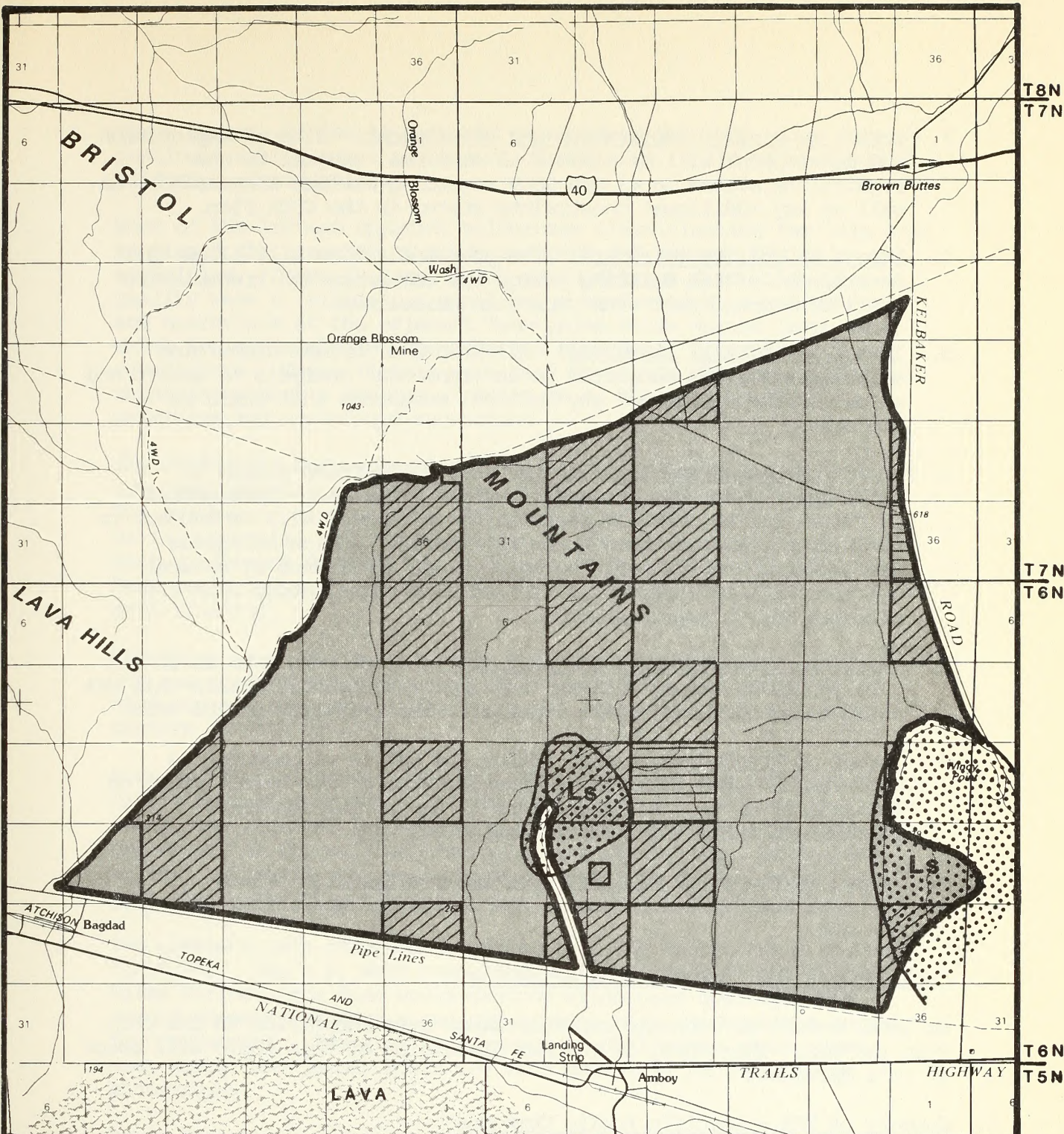
As of December, 1987, no unpatented mining claims were on record with the BLM within this WSA.

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Mineral development will cause localized impacts to naturalness. These impacts will occur in the mineralized portion covering approximately 5% of the WSA. Opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation will be adversely impacted along designated routes of travel by the continued use of off-highway vehicles (OHV). In this WSA, five to ten miles of routes will remain open. Military aircraft engaged in low-level training exercises will continue to momentarily disrupt solitude.

Development of private inholdings, coupled with any associated access requirements, will have an adverse impact on naturalness, and indirectly, on solitude and on primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

2. Impact on Vehicle-Dependent Recreational Opportunities: These activities will be allowed to continue. Access on the roughly five to ten miles of existing routes and trails found within this study area will remain open.



R 11 E | R 12 E

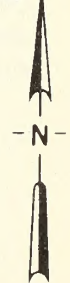
- NONE Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

Explanation

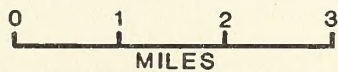
- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

Ls Limestone



**South Bristol Mountains
Mineral Resource Potential**



**MAP-2
CDCA-258A**

3. Impact on Mineral Exploration and Development: Mineral exploration and development will be allowed to continue, subject to the regulations stated in 43 CFR 3809 regarding surface disturbance, as well as any additional constraints stated in the CDCA Plan.
4. Impact on Utility Corridors: The proposed action will allow full development of the existing energy and communication transmission corridors, consistent with CDCA Plan guidelines.
5. Impact on Cultural Resources: All proposed surface disturbing activities will be subjected to environmental analysis to detect and allow for the salvage of any cultural resources that would be impacted.
6. Impact on Native American Values: Native American access to traditional religious sites will remain available. Some sacred features such as mountain peaks or water sources will be subject to administrative protection under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Any changes to the physical appearance of natural features will be approved only based upon consultation with the affected Native American group.
7. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep/Habitat: Since this area is so rarely used by desert bighorn, any impact to habitat within this WSA would cause only negligible impacts to the viability of the herd.
8. Impact on Non-Federal Lands: Since the WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation, there will be no impact on the ability of private land owners to use or develop their inholdings, subject to County regulations.
9. Impact on Low-Level Military Training Overflights: These opportunities will continue in the designated operations area over the WSA.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Some comments contested road designations. Field evaluations on the ground and from the air revealed a prospecting road but otherwise supported the findings.

2. Study Phase: Of the 16 comments received on this WSA, nine favored continued multiple use management of the area, while seven favored wilderness designation.

Most of the letters opposing wilderness classification for this area mentioned the presence of roads and past and present mining activities. Other features which would detract from wilderness quality were a railroad, a pipeline, a road used by a gas company, and operations at the adjacent Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base which include exploding ordnance and supersonic aircraft overflights. These factors were said to negate the possibility of obtaining either a feeling of solitude or the opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation.

The California Energy Commission and an oil company stated that the area has potential for geothermal energy, as well as oil and gas. The southwest third and the northeast third were identified as having potential. A representative of the Marine Corps Base stated that wilderness designation of this and other units adjoining the Base could reduce the Base's ability to provide realistic, effective arms training.

Vehicle access was requested for prospectors, rockhounds, campers, and gas company employees. In addition, access was needed by students and researchers who study the well-preserved volcanic craters in this area.

Proponents of wilderness designation pointed out the remoteness and naturalness of this WSA. An area of rugged, diverse terrain, it is one of the starkest landscapes in the desert and provides unusual opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Protection against motorized vehicle scars was urged; one writer noted that some scars now present would heal if the area were designated.

Two comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). The U.S. Navy commented that maneuvers at the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base would destroy wilderness quality. The second comment was from a gem and mineral club which wanted access for rockhounds. The area is a source of chalcedony roses, agate, moss agate, and jasper agate and is a good area for wildflower photography.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were few comments specific to this WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this was one of the many WSAs opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in letters and printed coupons supporting multiple use classification of moderate use for this area. This was in agreement with both the Use Alternative and the Balanced Alternative. Conservation oriented groups and

individuals preferred the Protection Alternatives which recommended limited use for the area, or else asked for a wilderness designation. The same respondents again asked for a classification which would allow exploration for oil, gas, and geothermal resources.

4. Proposed Plan: There were few specific comments of this WSA in response to the Proposed Plan which recommended limited use for the unit. This classification was satisfactory for most of the conservation groups but was opposed by vehicle oriented groups which wanted more access for rock collecting.

Marble Mountains

CDCA 259

MARBLE MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-259)

1. THE STUDY AREA — 54,407 acres

The Marble Mountains WSA is located in San Bernardino County within the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 36,455 acres of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 2,671 acres of land owned by the State of California and private inholdings totaling approximately 15,281 acres. No split-estate land exists within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The north boundary of the WSA parallels a natural gas pipeline right-of-way for 23 miles. One mile south of the intersection of Interstate 40 and Kelbaker Road, the west boundary trends south along Kelbaker Road for five miles, then northeast to form a cherystem excluding the road and mining disturbances associated with Castle Mine. The boundary continues east for eight miles along the south face of the Marble Mountains excluding extensive mining activity involving the patented Iron Hat Mine, several smaller mining operations and roads and ways used as access to these sites. One mile north of Cadiz Summit, the southeast boundary follows State Highway 62 excluding most of the water diversion dikes utilized for flood control along the highway.

Approximately 30% of the WSA is nonpublic land. These sections are oriented in north-south alternating strips and effectively divide the WSA into two segments.

The public land acres within the WSA contain landforms consisting of 45% hills, 30% alluvial fans, 15% dissected fans, and 10% sand-covered hills. The Marble Mountains are a narrow volcanic range of interesting coloration extending some 12 miles in a northwest-southwest direction with long alluvial fans on both sides. Alternating dark brown and light brown striations have been tilted by geologic processes and give a marble appearance to the range. Through the center, several yellowish sandstone peaks with long talus slopes are prominent. Trending eastward from the main mountain mass, the landform is one of low rolling hills and sloping bajadas. Vegetation is more dense and varied in this edge zone than in the mountains as a result of the large number of small washes dissecting the valley. Throughout the WSA, vegetation is characteristic of the lower Mojave Desert and is predominantly creosote bush scrub and desert wash scrub. Investigations to date have not revealed the occurrence of any Federal- or State-listed rare, threatened, or endangered plants.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE —

0 acres recommended for
wilderness
36,455 BLM acres recommended for
nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented using all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The no wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale:

(1) the WSA does not contain any noteworthy special features not already represented in other suitably recommended WSAs and designation would contribute little to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS); (2) there is almost no demand for primitive recreation opportunities within this WSA; (3) the WSA possesses only marginal wilderness values; (4) large portions of the area have moderate to high potential for one or more of the following commodities: gold, copper, silver, iron, bentonite, and limestone; and (5) manageability as wilderness is further complicated by the presence of sizable non-Federal inholdings, by the need to maintain Interstate 40, and by the presence of a designated utility corridor partially within the WSA.

The Marble Mountains WSA, while natural in character, contains no unusual features or resources, and is merely an area of undeveloped public land. Designation of this area as wilderness would contribute little to the diversity of the NWPS. It is ecologically similar to other areas identified for wilderness designation. The WSA does support a sizeable population of bighorn sheep. However, several other suitably recommended WSAs in the area also support bighorn population. Within 50 miles are eight other BLM study areas recommended for addition to the NWPS. Many of these eight areas display the same ecosystem, landforms and also contain notable special features of scientific and general recreation and sightseeing interest. There are approximately three miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

Recreational use of the WSA is steadily increasing with visitation of approximately 500 visitor use days occurring annually along the ten miles of primitive routes within the study area. Very little demand for primitive recreation exists that is not dependent upon an off-highway vehicle (OHV) for access. Recreational activities include rockhounding, upland game hunting, and botanic and geologic sightseeing. Most recreational use is generated from the Los Angeles Basin and local desert communities as the proximity is ideal for weekend use visits. The WSA is well advertised in rock and gem publications and numerous groups frequent the area to collect azurite, white and blue limestone, and vaughn marble. Several universities in California have identified portions of the WSA as a teaching and research

site. The area receives numerous college and university visits annually. Although some hiking and backpacking does occur, such use is generally dependent upon an OHV for access and restricted to the winter and spring months as water supplies are limited and high temperatures are likely to be encountered during the summer and fall.

Existing land ownership patterns substantially reduce the ability of the BLM to manage the area for wilderness. Approximately 30% of the WSA is nonpublic land. The mosaic land ownership pattern breaks the WSA into north-south alternating strips of public lands resulting in the eastern portion of the WSA not being contiguous with the western portion. This pattern of ownership makes it difficult to assure that wilderness values would be maintained.

The WSA shows a moderate to high potential for one or more of the following commodities: gold, silver, iron, copper, bentonite, limestone, and high grade marble, and is presently encumbered by 71 mining claims. In the event of wilderness designation, BLM's assessment of the WSA's mineral potential suggests that some of the 71 mining claims would prove valid and holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with development which would make it difficult to protect wilderness values. The alluvial fans and bajadas contain a moderate potential for saleable minerals used in construction, repair and maintenance of Interstate 40 located two miles north of the WSA, and for stabilization and repair of the Atkison, Topeka, and Sante Fe (AT&SF) railroad grade located five miles south of the WSA.

Wilderness designation would prohibit full development of energy and transmission corridors "G" and "H" established in the CDCA Plan to minimize the number of separate rights-of-way traversing the desert. These two-mile wide corridors overlap the northern and southeastern boundaries of the WSA for approximately one mile. These corridors, along with others in the CDCA and the State were designated to accommodate the long-term energy and communication needs of the southwestern United States. Depending upon which WSA's are designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may or may not be constraints to full development of such corridors.

Throughout history, the Mojave Desert has and continues to provide countless opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation to the adventurous explorer. The remoteness of the desert, coupled with the extreme summer temperatures and relative lack of reliable permanent water sources are, in part, a few reasons why this desert continues to harbor its vast unpopulated open spaces. The Marble Mountains WSA, located within the Mojave Desert is no exception. A variety of wilderness recreational opportunities are available. Vistas of Cadiz Valley provide a feeling of vastness and solitude while the variety of color and structural rock formations make the area valuable for numerous interpretive, natural, and environmental studies. While the Marble Mountains possess a favorable blend of recreational opportunities and natural resources, when compared to other BLM, USFS, and NPS wilderness areas throughout California and other states, designation of the Marble Mountains would not contribute any unique or interesting features to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). The fact remains

that the WSA contains no unusual features or resources and that, while natural in character, is merely an area of undeveloped Federal land.

Management of the WSA in the absence of wilderness designation would follow prescriptions for limited and moderate use guidelines as outlined in the CDCA Plan. Management under these guidelines would allow motorized vehicle access on approved routes of travel and provide for carefully controlled use of the resources within the study area.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	36,455
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		2,671
Private		15,281
Total		<u>54,407</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	36,455
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Lands Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>36,455</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The WSA generally appears to have been affected by the forces of nature with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable. Signs of man's presence include numerous mining claim markers, shafts and pits. A loose network of old mining access routes traverses the study area on the west and south. Those routes located in washes are subject to flash flooding, therefore erasing their evidence on a regular basis. Connecting routes appear to be slowly falling into an unusable condition and over time will not be noticeable to the uninformed visitor.
2. Solitude: The Marble Mountains offer isolation in the steep canyons and broad views of the surrounding, sparsely populated landscape. These factors provide seclusion and offer good opportunities for solitude within the WSA.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: These opportunities are enhanced by the perceived amounts of open space the area provides and the lack of any noticeable man-made intrusions. The varied rock structures in these mountains provide challenging terrain for a variety of types of primitive recreation.
4. Special Features: The Marble Mountains have one of the larger and more rapidly growing desert bighorn sheep herds in the eastern Mojave Desert. The desert bighorn sheep is a BLM sensitive species. Ten years ago, the range was considered marginal and to support no more than 20 head of permanent bighorn sheep. Today, the range supports well in excess of 100 desert bighorn sheep. Two big game guzzlers and several other water sources have been constructed. All of these waters are utilized, at least on a seasonal basis, by bighorn sheep. Nesting and foraging raptors also occur in the Marble Mountains. These species include prairie falcons, red-tailed hawks, and possibly golden eagles. The desert bajadas and larger washes provide good habitat for the desert tortoise with densities up to 50 individuals per square mile. The desert tortoise is a BLM sensitive species and is currently under status review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for listing as a threatened species. No Federal or State listed rare, threatened or endangered wildlife species are known to occur in the Marble Mountains.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 36,455 acres of the American Desert/Creosote bush (*Larrea*) ecosystem. Designation of the Marble Mountains WSA would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the NWPS. Other suitably recommended WSAs throughout the CDCA offer a more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

<u>Bailey-Kuchler</u> <u>Classification</u> <u>Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,231,454
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,617,650

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of eight major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population</u> <u>Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Arizona</u>				
Phoenix	40	1,758,456	118	4,449,908
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of eight BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 80 miles southwest.

C. Manageability

The WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, manageability is complicated by the following factors: (1) large zones of moderate to high mineral potential coupled with a large number of mining claims; (2) a high percentage of non-Federal inholdings; and (3) the presence of a designated utility corridor partially within the southeast and north boundaries of the study area.

Presently, two bighorn sheep guzzlers are located within the WSA. Maintenance on these guzzlers is required approximately two times per year, and normally requires mechanized equipment and vehicles for transportaiton of materials to the site.

The WSA contains areas of moderate to high potential for a variety of minerals and is presently encumbered by 71 unpatented mining claims located on 2180 acres. Although wilderness designation would withdraw the area from claim location, BLM's assessment of the area's mineral potential suggests that some of the existing claims would prove valid. Holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with developments deemed necessary or reasonably incidental to their mining operation, subject only to not causing unnecessary or undue degradation. This provision would do little to protect wilderness values as even necessary mining developments could significantly alter natural conditions at the site and potentially disrupt opportunities for solitude over a much greater area.

Moderate to large size washes contain materials suitable for potentially developable sources of saleable materials such as sand, gravel and rock. These materials are suitable for flood control and highway maintenance. Areas adjacent to the WSA are currently utilized by AT&SF Railroad and the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for stabilization, flood control and highway maintenance projects. Current economic surveys indicate that demand for these commodities is moderate. Although sources near populations centers are available, the cost for transportation to the remote desert areas is significant.

The amount of private inholdings and the mosaic pattern of land ownership makes it difficult to assure that existing wilderness values can be maintained in the foreseeable future. Reasonable access to the majority of the inholdings does not currently exist. Anticipated use and development of these inholdings is not very likely to be compatible with wilderness values.

Designation as wilderness has the potential to conflict with development of future communication and energy transmission facilities. The north and southeast boundaries are within a two-mile wide energy and utility transmission corridor identified by the BLM and the State of California in their Western Regional Corridor Study (1980). Wilderness designation of the Marble Mountains WSA (CDCA-259) or the Clipper Mountains WSA (CDCA-260) would prohibit full development in this corridor forcing installation of new energy transmission lines in other corridors or in areas not previously disturbed.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Marble Mountains WSA is within the BLM Marble Mountains Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area. The G-E-M write-up in the wilderness portion of CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) indicated that the mineral resource data for the WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated and interpreted at the time the wilderness recommendation was made. However, the EIS did identify a known potential for gold, limestone, garnet, and iron and a possible potential for other metals, uranium, and bentonite clay. As of December 12, 1979, there were three unpatented mining claims recorded with BLM within the Marble Mountains WSA. Map 2 reflects the resource potential of the WSA.

BLM GRA file data in 1980 indicated a moderate potential for the occurrence of iron in the south-central portion of this WSA. The mineralization is contact metamorphic type with lenses of magnetite and hematite in Cambrian limestone near contacts with intrusive granite. About 2,000 tons of iron ore were mined in the 1940's from the Iron Hat deposits, just outside the WSA boundary. The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) Report (1953) states that the iron deposits have 85,000 tons of indicated ore and an additional inferred reserve of about 200,000 long tons. H.M. Kilien, in a master's thesis on the geology of the Marble Mountains (USC, 1964) reported that limestone associated with the iron ore was mined (early 1960's) in the vicinity of the Iron Hat Mine, to test its viability as a cement limestone quarry; no further work had been done. This area was also classified as having a high potential for the occurrence of limestone under the BLM classification system.

The gold-copper-silver mineralization occurs at the Golden Cycle or Castle Mine (west-central part of the WSA) in quartz veins in granitic rock. The CDMG report (1953) states that the mine was developed by two 275 foot shafts and produced small amounts of ore in 1911 and intermittently between 1933 and 1941. Although the

Castle Mine is cherrystemmed outside of the WSA boundary, the immediate surrounding area was classified as having a moderate occurrence potential for gold, copper and silver, as shown on Map 2.

Also, in this WSA, the G-E-M report indicates some potential for nonmetallics, including limestone, garnet and bentonite. A high occurrence potential for building stone marble exists in the southern part of the WSA. Small quarries of this variegated stone, occurring along a two-mile belt mainly outside the WSA, produced marble blocks for building construction between 1937 and 1939.

Bentonite has been mined from Tertiary volcanics within and adjacent to the WSA. An area of Tertiary volcanics was identified in the 1980 GRA file as having a high potential for the occurrence of bentonite in the eastern part of the WSA. There was no data in the GRA file to support the known potential for garnet and possible potential for uranium as indicated in the 1980 EIS.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Decision: No U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) or CDMG mineral surveys were conducted in this WSA since it is recommended nonsuitable.

As of December, 1987, no mining or exploration plans of operation had been filed with the BIM within this WSA. Unpatented lode and placer claims are concentrated in the north-central portion of the WSA. Unpatented mining claims in the WSA are summarized in the following table taken from BIM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	33	33	N/A	660	660
Placer	N/A	38	38	N/A	1520	1520
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	71	71	N/A	2180	2180

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Noise, surface disturbance and access requirements for mineral exploration and development will result in site-specific adverse impacts to naturalness, solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Solitude will be impacted by continued motorized vehicle use of the existing approved route of travel within the WSA.

2. Impact on Bighorn Sheep habitat: An adverse impact will occur within 70% (interior area) of the WSA as a result of noise and surface disturbance associated with recreation use and mineral development. This disturbance is likely to be minimal as a result of screening from steep terrain.
3. Impact on the Development of Energy/Transmission Facilities: Opportunities for development of these facilities would remain available subject to restrictions outlined in CDCA Plan.
4. Impact on Locatable/Saleable Mineral Exploration and Development: These opportunities would remain available subject to the regulations outlined in 43 CFR 3809 and 3600 and additional stipulations contained within the CDCA Plan.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

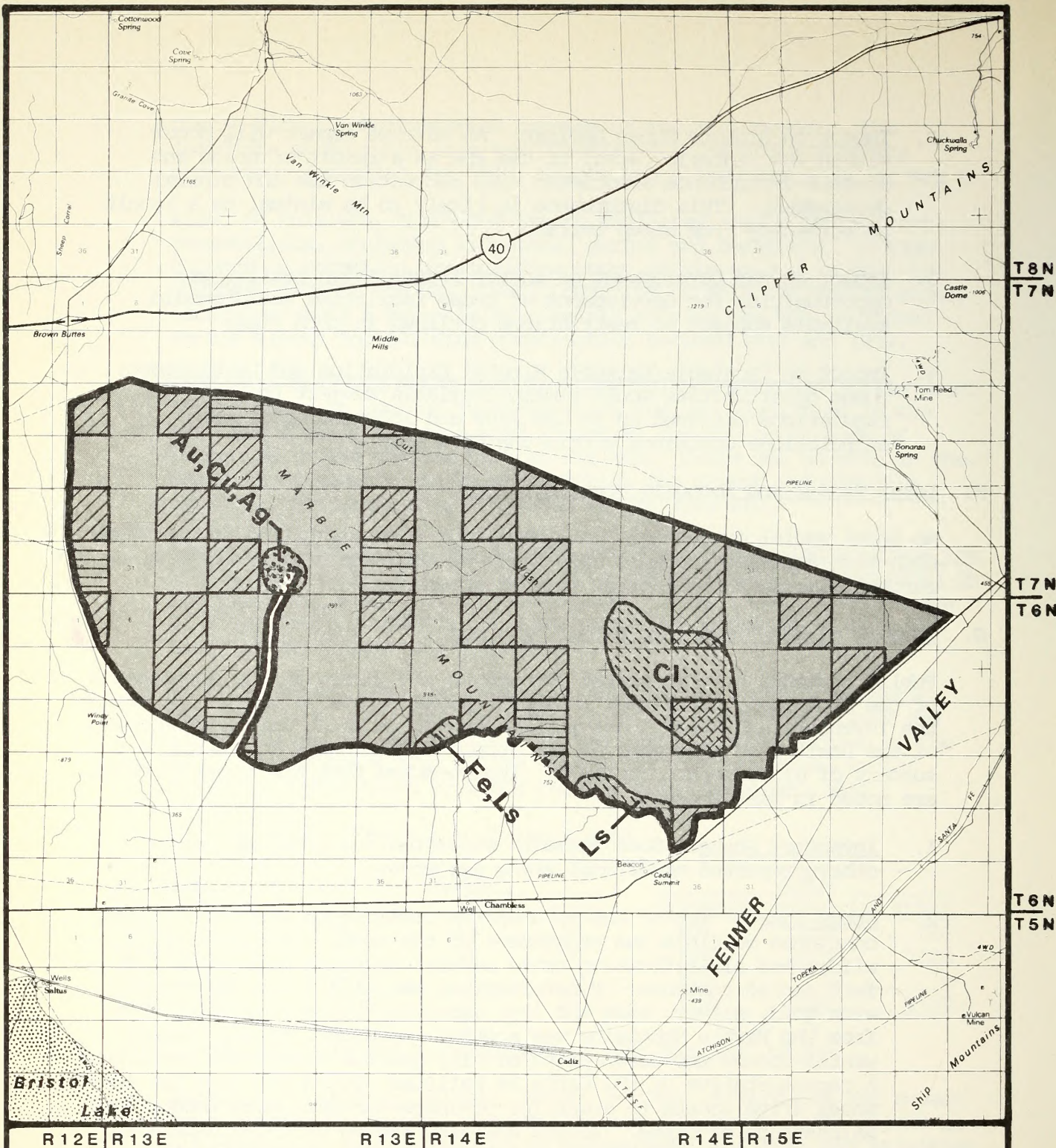
No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Because this topic was not explored in the EIS, no further discussion will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Some comments supported the findings, while others reported additional roads and ways.
2. Study Phase: Ten of the 15 comments received on this WSA favored continued multiple use management of the area. Opponents of wilderness classification noted several existing uses which they felt should continue. Mineralization was said to be important, with gold, silver, lead and iron deposits listed. Building stone from the Marble Mountains was another resource. An oil company wanted access for development of oil, gas and geothermal resources. A representative of the Santa Fe Railroad stated the need for four-wheel drive access to areas for drainage surveys, derailments, and maintenance of dikes. Access was also wanted by rockhounds and by student and research scientists for the study of trilobites which occur in the shale beds (outside of the study area). Another use within the area is grazing.

Features which were listed as detracting from the area's wilderness potential included the large proportion (31 percent) of private lands within the polygon, visual blights such as active and abandoned mines, a railroad on the southern and eastern sides of the area, a pipeline and past off-highway vehicle use.



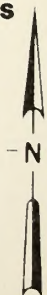
- NONE** Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

Explanation

- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- Ag** Silver
- Au** Gold
- CI** Clay(bentonite)
- Cu** Copper
- Fe** Iron
- Ls** Limestone



0 1 2 3
MILES

**Marble Mountains
Mineral Resource Potential**

**MAP-2
CDCA-259**

Wilderness proponents pointed out the unusually high scenic values and the isolation of the area, particularly the Marble Mountains. Steep, rugged mountains provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and a superb wilderness experience. The western face of the Marble Mountains is close enough to paved roads to be accessible to visitors without the necessity for unimproved roads for gaining access. One writer mentioned that wilderness classification would help protect the desert tortoise which is present here in significant numbers. Another respondent requested that the southern boundary be moved south to Route 66 in order to protect views available from the south.

One comment was received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). The Southern California Gas Company requested a 100-foot easement on all support roads for pipelines to insure that wilderness areas are not violated during maintenance operations.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were few comments specific to this WSA. However, this was one of many WSA's opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in letters and printed coupons supporting a multiple use classification of moderate use for this area. This was in agreement with both the Use Alternative and the Balanced Alternative. Conservation oriented groups and individuals preferred the Protection Alternative which recommended limited use for the area or else asked for a wilderness designation. The same respondents again asked for the classification which would allow exploration for oil, gas and geothermal resources.
4. Proposed Plan: There were few specific comments on this WSA in response to the Proposed Plan which recommended limited Use for the unit. This classification was satisfactory for most of the conservation groups but was opposed by vehicle oriented groups which wanted more access for rock collecting.

No comments were received from local governments.

Clipper Mountains

CDCA 260

CLIPPER MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-260)

1. THE STUDY AREA — 61,723 acres

The Clipper Mountains WSA is located in eastern San Bernardino County, in the east-central portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest cities are Needles, California 50 road miles east and Twentynine Palms, California 80 road miles southwest. The study area contains 43,448 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 2,623 acres of State land, and private inholdings totalling 15,652 acres (see Map 1 and Table 1).

Moving from west to east, the north WSA boundary is aligned with the Interstate 40 right-of-way for about 11 miles. In the vicinity of Goldhammer Mine, the easternmost six miles of the north boundary drops about one mile south of Interstate 40 to exclude lands lacking wilderness characteristics. The angular east boundary follows the Essex Road southeast, and then a utility line maintenance road southwest. The south boundary follows a gas pipeline right-of-way and associated maintenance road for the first two and three-quarter miles, then moves north to exclude the Tom Reed Mine and its maintained access road, along with several other mines and roads. The boundary then follows section lines and a short road segment for about six and one-half miles to exclude non-Federal lands and human impacts, finally returning to the gas pipeline maintenance road. Moving just one mile west, the south boundary again leaves the pipeline, to cherrystem a road and an area impacted by previous mining activity. The remaining eight miles of the south boundary follows the gas pipeline road without interruption. This gas pipeline is within a two-mile wide, CDCA Plan-designated utility corridor which is partially inside the WSA's south boundary. The short western boundary is a wooden pole line maintenance road.

The Clipper Mountains WSA contains 35% alluvial fans, 20% mountains, 30% dissected fans and 15% hills. Elevations range from 2,000 to 4,604 feet. The WSA encompasses the Clipper Mountains, the bajada associated with Fenner Valley to the east, and a small group of hills at the western end called the Middle Hills. The mountains are oriented northeast to southwest; the most prominent ridge lies in the north-central region and is a large mesa with alternating yellow and dark brown horizontal striations. Jagged yellowish buttes and spires are scattered throughout the area south of this ridge. The low, pink ridges at the southern end of the WSA are capped with volcanic dikes and rocky spires.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0	acres recommended for wilderness
43,448	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for the Clipper Mountains WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The no-wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale:

(1) the WSA does not contain any noteworthy special features and would not contribute to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System; (2) there is almost no demand for primitive recreation opportunities within this WSA; (3) the WSA possesses only marginal wilderness values; (4) large portions of the area have moderate to high potential for one or more of the following commodities: gold, copper, lead, silver, zinc, tungsten, iron, manganese, uranium, and limestone; and (5) manageability as wilderness is further complicated by the presence of sizable non-Federal inholdings, by the need to maintain Interstate 40, and by the presence of a designated utility corridor partially within the WSA.

The Clipper Mountains WSA, while natural in character, contains no unusual features or resources, and is merely an area of undeveloped public land. Designation of this area as wilderness would not contribute to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System. It is ecologically similar to other areas identified for wilderness designation. Within 50 miles are eight other BLM study areas recommended for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Many of these eight areas display the same ecosystem and landforms as this WSA, and also contain notable special features of scientific and general recreation and sightseeing interest. There are approximately 16 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

The WSA receives low recreation use (less than 100 visitor-use days annually), which is almost exclusively motorized use for rockhounding and upland game hunting. Demand for primitive recreation opportunities in this WSA is almost nonexistent. The area receives little use presumably because there is little to attract visitors, who are drawn instead to the other nearby areas containing a wealth of special features.

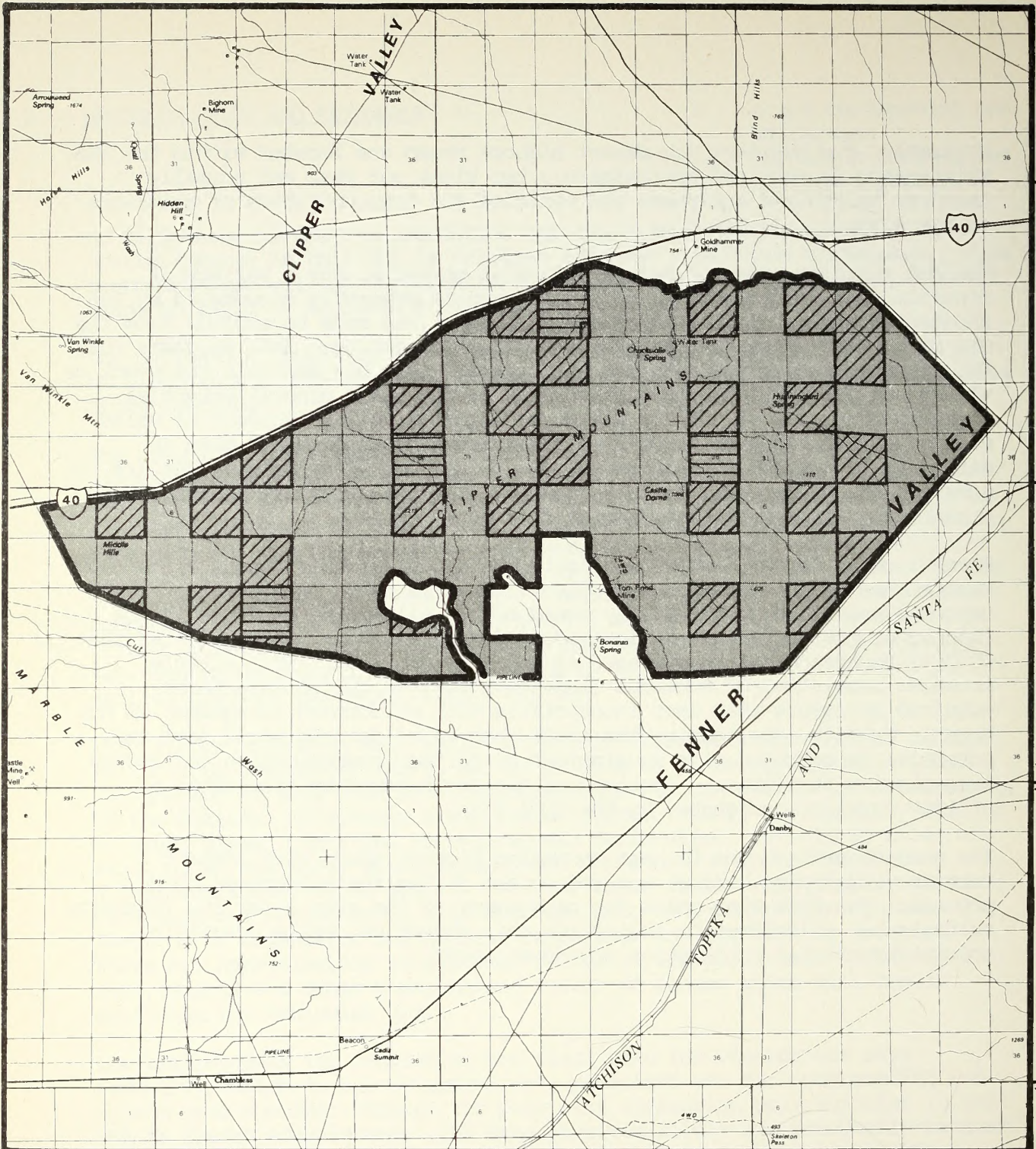
The WSA only marginally meets the definition of wilderness provided in section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. Naturalness has been reduced in portions of the WSA from many decades of mining activity, intensive military training maneuvers, and the presence of interstate highway flood control dikes.

Presently, two guzzlers for desert bighorn sheep are located within the WSA. Maintenance is required approximately two times per year and normally requires mechanized equipment and vehicles for transportation of materials to the site.

The WSA contains areas of moderate to high potential for a variety of minerals, has a long history of mining, and is presently encumbered by 236 unpatented mining claims. Although an attempt was made to exclude from the WSA mines which have been major past producers, geologic data suggests that the deposits associated with the mines extend into the WSA. In the event of wilderness designation, BIM's assessment of the WSA's mineral potential suggests that some of the 236 claims would prove valid. Holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with development, which would make it difficult to protect wilderness values. Since the wilderness values are not notable, the WSA appears to have greater value for carefully managed mineral exploration and development than it does as wilderness.

Several other factors would complicate management of this WSA as wilderness. Maintenance of the Interstate 40 diversion dikes which extend into the WSA beyond the existing right-of-way would not be allowed to continue if the Clipper Mountains WSA was designated wilderness. Approximately 30% of the Clipper Mountains WSA is composed of non-Federal lands. This sizable acreage, consisting of numerous individual parcels, would have to be acquired to assure that uses incompatible with wilderness management do not occur. Finally, designating the study area as wilderness would have the potential to conflict with development of further communication and energy transmission facilities. Portions of the south boundary are within a utility corridor designated by the CDCA Plan.

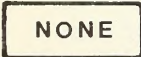



The need to protect the Clipper Mountains bighorn sheep herd, desert tortoise and raptor habitat was recognized during the wilderness study process. The CDCA Plan calls for management of the area under low intensity multiple use guidelines to accomplish this objective, while permitting access for mineral exploration and development.



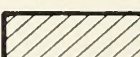


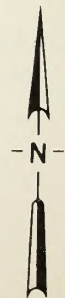
R13E R14E

R14E R15E

R15E R16E

-  NONE
-  RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
-  RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS
-  LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

-  SPLIT ESTATE
-  STATE
-  PRIVATE



**Clipper Mountains
Proposal
MAP-1**

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-260
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	43,448
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		2,623
Private		15,652
Total		<u>61,723</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	43,448
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>43,448</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Numerous routes of travel penetrate the northern, western and eastern boundaries. In particular, one well-traveled route extends southeast from Interstate Highway 40 for approximately five miles into the WSA. Dikes to divert flash flood waters from Interstate 40 are within the WSA. The colorful volcanic areas of the Clipper Mountains were heavily impacted by Operation Desert Strike and by artillery shelling during World War II training maneuvers, and vestiges of these activities are still visible. A large area in the northern and eastern portions of the WSA is

possibly contaminated by unexploded military ordnance, an additional remnant of the World War II military training maneuvers. A big game guzzler has been installed at a spring in the Clipper Mountains. With these exceptions, the area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude are available within the WSA. The high, flat-topped ridges, low, rocky buttes and scattered hills provide screening from other visitors. This variety of the terrain also offers varying degrees of challenge for a diversity of recreational opportunities.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Although the WSA does provide opportunities for a primitive recreational experience, it has attracted almost no use of this type.
4. Special Features: A permanent population of desert bighorn sheep reside in the Clipper Mountains, estimated at about 40 individuals. Recent aerial surveys verify this estimate and indicate that perhaps as many as 50 or more bighorn sheep exist in the WSA, supported by several good natural water sources and two big game guzzlers. There are no known Federal- or State-listed rare, threatened, or endangered species of wildlife occurring in the Clipper Mountains.

Approximately ten percent of the WSA falls within the Fenner/Chemehuevi Valley Habitat Management Area which was designated in the CDCA Plan for the protection of the Desert tortoise, a protected species in the State of California. The Desert tortoise is also a BLM sensitive species and is currently under status review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for listing as a threatened species.

No unusual plant assemblages, no BLM sensitive plants, and no Federal or State listed rare, threatened, or endangered plants are known to occur in this WSA.

The Clipper Mountains have traditionally been occupied by the Chemehuevi. Ethnographic informants have indicated that this region is a portion of the larger bighorn sheep and deer hunting territory employed by the Chemehuevi in historic times.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 43,448 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush (Larrea) ecosystem. This province is widespread throughout the California desert and is represented in areas recommended for wilderness designation.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

<u>Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,224,461
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,610,657

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of eight major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of wilderness areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of these population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Arizona</u>				
Phoenix	40	1,758,456	118	4,449,908
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The closest designated area is the Joshua Tree Wilderness in Joshua Tree National Monument, approximately 50 air miles south. Within 50 air miles of the Clipper Mountains WSA are eight BLM CDCA wilderness study areas recommended for wilderness designation.

C. Manageability

The Clipper Mountains WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, manageability is complicated by the following factors: the presence of interstate highway water diversion structures within the area, large zones of moderate to high mineral potential coupled with a large number of mining claims, a high percentage of non-Federal inholdings, and the presence of a designated utility corridor partially within the south boundary of the WSA.

Several large diversion dikes for Interstate 40 are within the north boundary of the study area. Not only do these earthen structures detract from naturalness, they require regular maintenance to protect the highway against flash floods. If the Clipper Mountains WSA, with its current boundaries, was designated wilderness, mechanical maintenance of the diversion dikes could not be allowed to continue.

The WSA contains areas of moderate to high potential for a variety of minerals, and is presently encumbered by 236 unpatented mining claims. Although wilderness designation would withdraw the area from claim location, BLM's assessment of the area's mineral potential suggests that some of the existing claims would prove valid. Even necessary mining developments, restricted to the least possible environmental impact, could significantly alter natural conditions at the site, and potentially disrupt opportunities for solitude over a much greater area.

Approximately 30% of the Clipper Mountains WSA is composed of non-Federal lands. This sizable acreage, consisting of numerous individual parcels, would have to be acquired to assure that uses incompatible with wilderness management do not occur. The San Bernardino County General Plan designates it as Rural Conservation. Zoning is Desert Living which would permit one residence on 40 acres. Under County planning guidance, several hundred private parcels could be created with allowable uses ranging from residential to industrial or commercial.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Clipper Mountains WSA is within the BLM Marble Mountains Geology-Energy-Minerals (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The 1980 G-E-M resource data for this WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated, and interpreted at the time of the wilderness

recommendation. However, the EIS for the CDCA Plan stated that the WSA had potential for gold, lead, silver, iron, tungsten, uranium, limestone, and pumice. Bureau records show there were no claims on record with BLM in the WSA as of December 12, 1979.

BLM GRA file data identifies a high occurrence potential for tungsten in two areas of the WSA, adjacent to the northern border and in the east-central part. The northernmost area also has high potential for the occurrence of manganese and iron minerals, and the east-central area also has a high occurrence potential for gold and silver. These mineralized areas are shown on Map 2, as are other mineralized areas identified in the 1980 GRA file.

Two mines are described in the San Bernardino County Report (Wright et al, 1953, in Journal of Mines and Geology, Volume 49, California Division of Mines). The two mined areas within the WSA are the Clipper Mountains in the eastern part of the WSA and the Gold Reef Mine adjacent to the south boundary. The Clipper Mountains tungsten mine occurs as a contact type skarn deposit which produced less than 150 tons of tungsten ore in 1951 and 1952. The Gold Reef Mine to the south, consisted of bold northwest striking quartz-calcite veins in Miocene volcanic rocks. The near parallel veins crop out along this zone for a distance of four miles. The area was discovered in 1915 but production figures not available.

Neither the GRA report or the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) County Report for San Bernardino County list specific occurrences of pumice, although there are large amounts of Tertiary volcanic outcrop in this WSA and it is quite probable that pumice deposits exist. The GRA file identifies two limestone occurrences in the northern part of the WSA, overlapping part of the area with a high potential for the occurrence of tungsten as well. The area for limestone occurrence is shown on Map 2. There is no production data for limestone available.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Decision: No U.S. Geological Survey or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral surveys were conducted in this WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

FMC conducted a gold exploration program in March and April, 1987 within the east-central portion of the WSA, shown on Map 2 as having a high occurrence potential for gold, tungsten, and silver.

As of December 1987, one mining/exploration plan of operation had been filed with the BLM for lands within the WSA. Unpatented lode mining claims are located in the north, southeast, and east portions of the WSA. The following table provides a summary of active mining claims recorded with BLM as of December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUTTABLE	NONSUTT.	TOTAL	SUTTABLE	NONSUTT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	236	236	N/A	4,720	4,720
Placer	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	236	236	N/A	4,720	4,720

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values will decline over the long term as exploration and development occurs in areas of moderate to high mineral potential. Decline in values will also occur as a result of parcel subdivision and development on the sizeable private acreage. Wilderness values will be retained in the portions of the WSA not subjected to mining.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: The proposed action will have no impact. Further exploration, as well as development of the 236 existing claims, can proceed subject to existing laws and regulations.
3. Impact on Sensitive Wildlife Habitat: Future planned actions will be subject to environmental analysis to identify any potential impacts to bighorn sheep and desert tortoise habitat, allowing development and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.
4. Impact on Native American Uses: Native American access to traditionally used sites will be retained.
5. Impact on Archeological Resources: All proposed surface disturbing activities will be subjected to environmental analysis to allow the detection and salvage of any resources.
6. Impact on Expansion of Regional Energy Transmission Corridors: The proposed action will allow full development of the existing energy and communication transmission corridor, consistent with CDCA Plan guidelines.
7. Impact on Maintenance of Interstate 40: Highway maintenance activities, including maintenance of water diversion dikes within the WSA, can continue.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Known inaccuracies are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Some of the comments received supported the findings in the narrative. Others indicated that mineral potential should be considered.
2. Study Phase: Eight comments were received on this WSA. Three favored further evaluation for this area; one noted that the area met the 2(c) criteria and merited further study. Five respondents opposed further wilderness consideration for this WSA.

Those favoring wilderness stated that this is an excellent natural area with many opportunities for solitude. Two respondents commented that the Clipper Mountains are a striking scenic features, resembling an old clipper ship from a distance. They felt that wilderness designation would help to maintain the scenic viewshed for the benefit of freeway drivers. The importance of the area as a wildlife sanctuary was also mentioned, particularly for the desert tortoise population of the Clipper Valley. It was suggested that the WSA be extended to include the Goldhammer Mine, a historic area which deserves preservation. It was also proposed that Bonanza Spring, which is now excluded from the WSA, be incorporated into the unit so that reclamation of this important riparian area could occur.

Those opposing wilderness for this WSA brought up several points. A representative of the Santa Fe Railroad stated there is a need for access to the area for conducting drainage surveys, making flash flood studies, repairing derailments, and maintaining dikes. An oil company requested access for exploration for oil, gas, and geothermal resources. A geologist stated that more space may be needed to explore extension of the Gold Reef mine into the WSA. The Gold Reef mining district has potential for gold, silver, and tungsten. Factors detracting from wilderness quality were listed as the difficulty of finding solitude, the large percentage of private land, clear evidence of extensive past and present mining, and past off-highway vehicle use of existing routes.

Two comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook of 3/15/79. One suggested moving the northern boundary several miles from Interstate 40 and moving the southeast boundary away from the town of Essex. The respondent felt that the large amount of

private land and the proximity to the highway made the area a poor candidate for wilderness. The Southern California Gas Company requested 100-foot easements along support roads for maintenance of utilities.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: Few comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a group of mining, rock collecting, and off-highway vehicle organizations. They recommended on a map that the Clipper Mountain portion of the WSA should be classified for low intensity multiple use, while the remainder of the WSA should be classified for moderate intensity multiple use. This classification would be in fairly good agreement with the Balanced Alternative and the No Action Alternative. A large number of club members submitted coupons supporting this position. Conservation-oriented groups and individuals favored wilderness designation for the entire WSA. This position was more protective than the Protection Alternative, which recommended wilderness for the Clipper Mountains, but low intensity multiple use for the rest of the WSA. This WSA was also among the many for which an oil company requested access for exploration for oil, gas, and geothermal resources.
4. Proposed Plan: There were no specific comments on this WSA in response to the Proposed Plan, which recommended low intensity multiple use for the entire WSA.

No comments were received from local governments.

South Providence Mountains

CDCA 262

SOUTH PROVIDENCE MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-262)

1. THE STUDY AREA —

35,973 acres

The South Providence Mountains WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the eastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 31,590 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1,684 acres of land belonging to the State of California and private inholding totaling approximately 2,699 acres. No acres of split-estate land exists within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The north boundary parallels both a natural gas pipeline and transmission line rights-of-way for eight miles through Foshay Pass. At the intersection of the transmission line right-of-way and Kelbaker road, the west boundary parallels Kelbaker Road south for five miles then trends east and north to exclude Pine Tree Ranch and Arrowweed Spring and associated roads. One mile south of Granite Pass, the boundary leaves Kelbaker Road, trends east along the graded Hidden Hills Road for three miles where it turns north and excludes the road and mining activities associated with Bighorn Mine. The boundary then picks up Hidden Hills Road traversing northeast for four miles. At the Hidden Hills water tank, the boundary continues northwest for five miles until it intersects with the transmission line right-of-way forming the northern boundary. This portion of the WSA boundary follows no discernable topographical features of note as it was drawn to exclude a network of roads associated with past mining activities.

The WSA is completely within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated in 1980 by the Secretary of the Interior as an integral part of the CDCA Plan. The South Providence Mountains are a distinct part of a mountain chain that crosses the EMNSA, beginning with the Granite Mountains on the west and ending with the New York Mountains on the northeast. Four units of this 60 mile chain are recommended suitable for wilderness designation. Besides the South Providence Mountains, they are the Granite Mountains WSA (CDCA-256), Providence Mountains WSA (CDCA-263), and the Castle Peaks WSA (CDCA-266).

The South Providence Mountains WSA contains rugged mountains with many secluded canyons accompanied by vast sloping bajadas and valleys with numerous hidden washes. The shape of these heavily eroded mountains varies from a series of high, smoothly rounded ridges that lead to impressive, sharply peaked spires, with several shallow canyons etched into the mountain flanks. Elevations within the WSA vary from approximately 3,000 feet on the surrounding bajadas to peaks from 5,500 to 6,600 feet. The lower elevation flats and bajadas support a creosote/bur-sage habitat, which is enhanced on the upper slopes by often dense stands of cholla and yucca. The higher elevations support thin stands of pinyon pine and an occasional juniper. Nearly a dozen spring sites in the WSA allow small riparian zones to exist, marked by catclaw, arrow weed and desert broom.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. <u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> —	26,509	acres recommended for wilderness
	7,352	BIM acres recommended for nonwilderness

Partial wilderness (73% suitable) is the recommendation for the South Providence Mountain WSA. The 7,352 acres in this WSA recommended nonwilderness are released for uses other than wilderness. In addition to the Federal acreage recommended for wilderness, BLM recommends that 1,684 acres of State land, and 587 acres of private land within the recommended suitable area be acquired through voluntary exchange and/or purchase and designated as wilderness. Due to the location of these parcels within the WSA, they are critical for management of the area's wilderness integrity. Without them, management of the WSA would be very difficult. Acquisition of this private lands would render ownership of all surface acres to the U.S. Government. With acquisition of these inholdings, a total of 26,509 acres are recommended for wilderness designation. Appendix 1 lists all inholdings and provides additional information on their acquisition. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The partial-wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the land proposed for wilderness possess high quality wilderness values; (2) the partial wilderness recommendation is consistent with previous management actions and will result in the most manageable wilderness boundary; and (3) the partial wilderness recommendation will resolve conflicts between wilderness and multiple use activities, most notably mining.

The land recommended for wilderness designation exemplify the qualities described in the definition of wilderness contained within section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. Here "the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man," and "man himself is a visitor who does not remain." The land retains its "primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation." The large size and varied terrain, with its many secluded canyons and hidden washes, provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The WSA also possesses many opportunities for unconfined and primitive types of recreation. Spacious rolling valleys and bajadas, sheer cliffs, secluded canyons and available spring water provide abundant challenging opportunities limited only by the stamina of the visitor. Moderate visitation and the screening effects of very rugged topography insure ample opportunities for the seeker of solitude. Because

wilderness values are so significant, the suitability recommendation will preclude any further vehicular use of approximately 18 miles of primitive access routes of travel.

Competing resource uses involve mineral exploration and off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation use.

The study area has a moderate to high occurrence for gold and copper and may also have additional reserves of lead, copper and molybdenum, iron and fluorspar. A significant portion of the study area is encumbered by 238 mining claims.

The WSA is popular for general recreation and receives an estimated 500 visitor-use days annually with the majority of the use dependent upon an OHV for access. The study area is located adjacent to one of only two paved roads which provides access through this portion of the EMNSA. The latter part of the 1980s has brought a rapid increase in the amount of recreationists who frequent the area. Projected trends for recreation use levels within the EMNSA include an increase from the current 60,000 visitor-use days to 200,000 visits annually by 1997. Currently, OHV use of the South Providence Mountains is low to moderate and primarily concentrated in washes and a few heavily rutted old routes in and near Quail Spring Basin in the south portion of the WSA as rugged terrain and the lack of vehicle access precludes entry into the north portion of the study area. Hunters, attracted by deer, dove, chukar and quail, and rockhounds exploiting the old mines and Quail Spring Basin, are the most frequent users. Natural history study by organized groups occurs seasonally, induced by the closeness of other areas offering additional opportunities. Wilderness designation of the entire area would mean a significant curtailment of recreation opportunities dependent upon an OHV for access in this region of the desert.

Portions of the WSA and the north boundary are within a four to six mile wide existing utility corridor as identified in the Western Regional Corridor Study (1980). Expansion of these facilities would require an amendment to the CDCA and EMNSA Plans. The impacts of designation as wilderness would also have the potential to conflict with development of future communication and energy transmission facilities. Wilderness designation of the South Providence Mountains WSA and the Providence Mountains WSA (CDCA-263) located one mile north of the South Providence Mountains WSA would prohibit any further development in the corridor forcing installation of new energy transmission lines in other corridors or in areas not previously disturbed. Depending upon which WSA's are ultimately designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may be constraints placed upon the long-term energy and communication transmission capabilities in the southwestern United States.

The landforms and ecosystems within the 20% recommended as nonsuitable replicate areas already within or recommended for inclusion into the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). Naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation have all been affected by the longstanding uses associated with OHV use and mineral exploration and development.

This portion of the WSA has a moderate to high potential for gold and silver. Exploration and development has occurred since 1882 for gold, silver, copper, lead, iron and fluorspar with a value of the minerals produced in 1984 dollars estimated at approximately 3.5 million. These lands are criss-crossed with routes, abandoned mines and numerous shafts.

Exclusion of this area from wilderness places the boundary of the area recommended for wilderness along natural barriers which would enhance manageability and reduce enforcement problems by utilizing topographical features to further limit motorized vehicle access.

Recognizing the conflicts between mineral, OHV recreation use, and wilderness resources, it was decided that the wilderness resources on 73% of the study area exceed those of competing resources. In the portion recommended as nonsuitable, current restrictive actions cited within existing management plans provide for conservation of the sensitive resources. The CDCA Plan's limited use guidelines, coupled with the EMNSA Plan's enforcement of visual resource management guidelines to control the level of surface disturbance and requirement of a performance bond on all mining plans of operations to ensure reclamation, serve to lessen potential impacts to the area recommended for nonwilderness designation. Additionally, the EMNSA Plan proposes acquisition of all private lands within the study area.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	31,590
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		1,684
Private		2,699
Total		<u>35,973</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	24,238
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA) ¹	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA) ¹	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>24,238</u>
Inholdings ¹		
State		1,684
Private		587
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	7,352
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>7,352</u>

¹ Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area recommended for wilderness designation has generally retained its natural character containing only isolated and infrequent signs of man's presence. A few springs have been developed, but are still basically natural in appearance. Some small-scale mining prospects, posts and monuments associated with mining claim location, and occasional traces of vehicle use on ways or in washes are all substantially unnoticeable within the WSA.

Within the portion recommended for nonwilderness, natural conditions have been impacted by OHV use and past mining activities. The area is laced with primitive routes, numerous assessment holes, shafts, tunnels and several small mining prospects. All of these conditions existed at the time of wilderness inventory.

2. Solitude: Within the area recommended for wilderness designation, opportunities for solitude are presently aided by topography and the moderate rate of visitation. At present, use is limited to fall hunting, camping, casual mineral exploration and maintenance of a few range improvements. Structures on the WSA border (transmission line, microwave tower, mining activity) have little impact on the visitor within most of the WSA because of the effective screening provided by vegetation and terrain.

Within the portion of the WSA recommended for nonwilderness, less opportunities are available due to the openness of the terrain and lack of vegetative screening.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Within the area recommended for wilderness designation, opportunities for hiking, hunting, nature study, horseback riding and photography are good. One of the most interesting features of this area is the superb long distance views framed by the granite boulders or cholla-covered slopes of the South Providence Mountains.

Within the portion recommended for nonwilderness, a lesser degree of primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities are available since for most individuals, the quality of the experience would be reduced by the obvious human imprints in this area and the lack of topographical variation.

4. Special Features: The relatively rugged topography of the South Providence Mountains provides over 30 square miles of habitat for the desert bighorn sheep, a BLM Sensitive Species in California. Permanent and seasonal range as well as lambing grounds for this species occur in this WSA.

Raptors are well represented by species such as the golden eagle, prairie falcon, red-tailed hawk, rough-legged hawk, Cooper's hawk and American kestrel. At least three species of owls, the great horned owl, the barn owl, and the screech owl may be encountered in the WSA. Active aeries and nests for several of these species have been sited within the WSA.

One plant species of management concern occurs within the northern portion of the suitably recommended area. The cactus, Opuntia basilaris var. brachyclada is a BLM sensitive species in California and is also under status review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for listing as a threatened or endangered species.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The South Providence Mountains WSA contains 31,590 acres of the American Desert/Creosote bush (Larrea) ecosystem. Although designation as wilderness would not add an additional ecosystem or landform to the NWPS, it would preserve in its present state an area which possesses high quality wilderness resources.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification <u>Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,236,319
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,622,515

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of eight BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 80 miles south of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The entire WSA is manageable as wilderness. Within the area recommended for wilderness designation, there are some minor issues which require additional management consideration. The area recommended for wilderness has moderate to high potential for gold and copper and may have additional reserves of lead, zinc, molybdenum, fluorite, barite and uranium. This area is also encumbered by 142 mining claims encompassing 3840 acres. Because the area is so highly mineralized, it is probable that many mining claims will withstand validity exams, therefore retaining valid existing rights to continue with mining activities that are necessary and incidental to the mining operations after designation. Restrictions would be placed on these activities so as not to cause unnecessary or undue degradation, but sufficient latitude would still legally exist for site specific impacts to occur, decreasing existing wilderness values.

Because the study area is encumbered by mining claims with a moderate to high potential for development it is likely that the surrounding private lands have the same mineral values. Acquisition of these private parcels is essential to assure manageability.

Designation as wilderness would close approximately ten miles of primitive routes to OHV access. The potential impacts of displacing traditional users is considered significant as no other portion of the South Providence Mountains is visited with any regularity due primarily to the rugged terrain and lack of vehicle access. Enforcement of this closure would require signing and constant supervision.

The portion of the WSA recommended for nonwilderness would be difficult to manage as wilderness because motorized recreation use patterns are firmly established and the northeast boundary follows no discernible topographical features making boundary identification difficult. In addition, mineral reports completed for the area cite that due to the moderate to high mineral potential coupled with the high interest in the area, the probability of development of those claims within the nonsuitable portion is likely. Further, mining operations located immediately outside of the study area may have detrimental effects on wilderness qualities within this portion of the WSA by producing considerable noise, visual impacts and dust which will intrude several miles into the area's interior.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The geology, mineralization and past mining of the South Providence Mountains indicate a wide range of potential for the occurrence of several types of mineral resources. Mineralization appears to be controlled by the north-trending Big Horn and Hidden Hill fault zones where vein-type deposits (up to six feet wide and discontinuously for up to two miles long) predominate. The principal mineral commodities within and adjacent to the study area are gold, silver, copper and lead. Although the WSA has been leased for oil and gas in the past, the potential for energy resources remains unknown and there are no leases currently in the WSA. Exploration and mining activity has occurred in the study area since 1882. The Arrowhead Mining District is within the WSA. Six mines within the study area produced about 8,627 oz. of gold, 1,374 oz. of silver, 19,889 lbs. of copper, 21,348 lbs. of lead and less than 100 tons of iron and fluorspar. The total value of the minerals produced in 1984 dollars is about \$3.5 million. Primary production has been from the Big Horn, Buena Vista, Golden Gift, Hidden Hill, Pilot and Providence Mines. These mines are located in the eastern part of the WSA and most are within the BLM recommended nonsuitable portion. The Golden Gift Mine and about thirty prospects are located within the portion of the WSA BLM recommended suitable for wilderness designation.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Decision: The U.S. Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) estimated in their 1984 mineral surveys that the mines in the portion of the WSA recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation have over 211,550 tons of gold ore resources, and may have additional resources of disseminated gold, porphyry copper and molybdenum, lead and zinc. The report indicates that development of the mines in the nonsuitable portion is most likely. This also increases the likelihood for the development of mineralized properties in the suitable portion (Gold Stone, Adams-Anna Ore, Echo, Wild Ass, Golden Gift, Golden Nugget and two unknown names).

There is currently no active mining in the WSA, but interest remains high for exploration. Five mining plans have been submitted to BLM for approval, but were rejected because of the wilderness impairment issue and the BLM reclamation deadline. The potential for development of both the "nonsuitable" and the eastern and southern portions of the "suitable" areas remains high due to their close proximity to a local rail head and to its geological similarity to the actively explored and developed North Providence Mountains WSA (CDCA 263), located adjacent to the South Providence Mountains WSA. The USGS has classified the mineral resource occurrence potential for the study area as moderate to high for gold and copper.

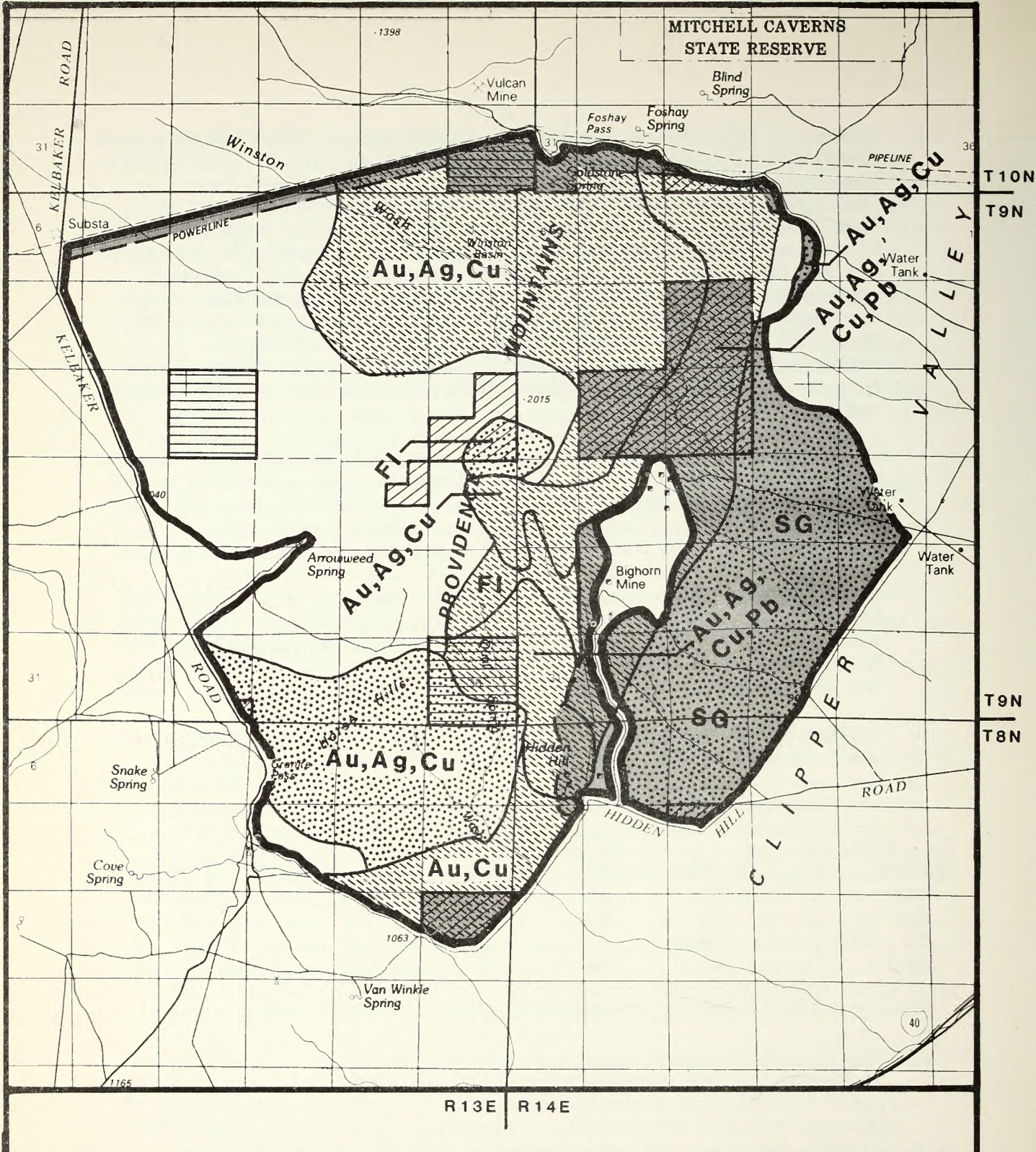
Unpatented mining claims in the WSA are summarized in the following table taken from BLM records dated January, 1988.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	92	91	183	1,840	1,820	3,660
Placer	50	5	55	2,000	200	2,200
Mill Site	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	142	96	238	3,840	2,020	5,860

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values will be maintained on 80% of the WSA recommended suitable if non-Federal inholdings and valid mineral rights are acquired. If not acquired, development of private land and valid mining claims will result in site-specific adverse impacts to wilderness values. On 20% of the WSA, naturalness would gradually decline over the long term should mineral exploration and development occur. These impacts will be site-specific and managed so as to conform to the guidelines outlined within the FMNSA and CDCA Plans.



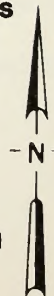
- Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

Explanation

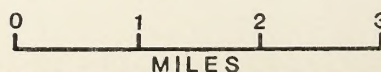
- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- Ag** Silver
- Au** Gold
- Cu** Copper
- FI** Fluorite/spar
- Pb** Lead
- SG** Sand & Gravel



South Providence Mountains Mineral Resource Potential



Map-2
CDCA-262

2. Impact on Habitat of Candidate Threatened/Endangered Plant Species: The proposed action will have a beneficial impact on 80% of the WSA, as a result of permanently excluding non-valid surface disturbing activities from the study area. On the 20% to remain nonwilderness, monitoring and patrol efforts, and mitigation measures to be stipulated as part of any authorized activities, will help assure that sensitive species receive adequate protection.
3. Impact on Expansion of Regional Energy/Utility Transmission Corridors: Constraints will exist on expansion of these facilities independent of wilderness. An amendment to the CDCA and EMNSA Plans is required prior to any authorization to expand facilities within the area identified by the State as an energy/transmission utility corridors. If such an amendment is approved, designation of both the South Providence Mountains CDCA-262 and Providence Mountains would preclude developments in the corridor.
4. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: The proposed action will close 80% of the WSA to OHV use resulting in a moderate adverse impact since approximately 500 visitor-use days would be displaced along with the closure of some ten miles of primitive routes utilized primarily as access for vehicle-based camping, hunting, and sightseeing. The remaining 20% of the WSA not recommended for wilderness designation would allow for continued motorized vehicle access on approved routes of travel.
5. Impact on Mineral Exploration and Development: Eighty percent of the WSA would be withdrawn from mineral entry including mineral leasing resulting in a moderate adverse impact to exploration and development since only those claims with a valid discovery could proceed with development. The remaining 20% of the WSA not recommended for wilderness designation would remain open to mineral entry subject to the regulations outlined in 43 CFR 3809 and additional measures cited within the CDCA and EMNSA Plans.
6. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep Habitat: Impacts to desert bighorn sheep and their habitat will be minor, consisting of site-specific habitat loss as a result of surface disturbance associated with OHV use and mineral exploration and development.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Most of the comments received on this WSA during the inventory phase were against the area's inclusion into the wilderness inventory, citing the area's lack of outstanding natural features and the presence of man-made intrusions in or near the roadless area. These intrusions were field checked, and some roads were added to the inventory map. Comments supporting the area's designation as a WSA cited the numerous springs, presence of bighorn sheep, outstanding long distance views and rugged beauty of the region as reasons for inclusion in the inventory.
2. Study Phase: Of the 39 comments received, 32 opposed wilderness designation. The two major issues raised were the area's value for vehicle-related recreation and the difficulties of experiencing solitude due to exterior sights and sounds. Vehicle-related activities cited included the necessity for motorized vehicle access for hiking, hunting, camping, horseback riding, nature study, rockhounding, painting and photography. Road access was also urged for prospecting, range management, wildlife maintenance, private land entry, maintenance of a microwave relay tower (not within the WSA), and mining. According to one respondent, 1,903 acres are leased for grazing. The potential for gold, silver, and iron is evidenced by the Vulcan and Bighorn Mines. There are extensive private land holdings in the eastern two thirds of the area. In regard to the exterior sights and sounds, several comments considered the many mines, a microwave repeater station, wildlife drinkers and guzzlers, transmission lines and associated roads, motorized vehicle uses, Mitchell Caverns tourists and developed waters that are near or within the WSA as too many intrusions for a wilderness proposal. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power noted that roads and powerlines along the WSA boundaries have a zone of influence that nullifies the naturalness of the area for approximately two and one-half miles. Kaiser Steel proposed that a wilderness boundary be drawn at least two miles away from the Vulcan Mine and their associated claims to minimize the impact of development of these claims.

Those comments favoring wilderness designation mentioned wildlife habitat for bighorn sheep and the opportunities available in the South Providence mountains for primitive recreation, notable cave exploration, rock climbing and hiking. The numerous springs in the WSA were mentioned as benefitting hiking activity and wildlife. One comment suggested that wilderness designation would reduce the possibility of damage from motorized vehicle use. Two letters

mentioned that designation of this and adjacent WSAs would provide a corridor of protected mountain ranges from the Granites to the North Providence Mountains.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: A variety of public comments specific to this WSA were received. The National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding and ORV groups, recommended that this WSA be recommended nonsuitable or MUC M (moderate use). Many club members supported this position by sending in printed coupons or letters. Conservation-oriented groups favored wilderness classification for the entire WSA. Some respondents wished to see the entire WSA combined with WSA's 263 and 264 in one large wilderness area. Others requested wilderness suitability for more non-mountainous terrain under the Balanced Alternative. The Southern California Gas company requested that the boundary be moved to at least 100 feet from the edges of their rights-of-ways to provide adequate access for maintenance.
4. Proposed Plan: Many comments were received from respondents who wanted the entire WSA recommended for wilderness. Reasons were the same as those given above.

No comments were received from local governments.

APPENDIX 1
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION
SOUTH PROVIDENCE MOUNTAINS WSA (CDCA-262)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				TOTAL ACREAGE	NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	
	TWNSHP	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN			SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)
1	9N.	13E.	13	SBM	*(480)	11	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	UNKNOWN	27.5
2	9N.	13E.	16	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
3	9N.	13E.	23	SBM	120	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
4	9N.	13E.	36	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0

* Indicates that exact parcel acreage is unknown. Total acreage and total estimated costs for all such parcels in a particular section are shown in ().

These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.

Providence Mountains

CDCA 263

PROVIDENCE MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-263)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

64,460 acres

The Providence Mountains WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest communities are Needles, California, 65 miles east; Barstow, California, 100 miles west; and Las Vegas, Nevada, 120 miles northeast. The WSA includes 61,946 acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 2,242 acres of land belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totaling approximately 272 acres. No split-estate land exists within the WSA boundaries (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The boundaries of the study area follow a combination of paved and graded roads, natural features and private lands. Beginning at the northeast tip of the study area, the north boundary follows Macedonia Canyon Road west for two miles then drops south excluding Columbia Mine and its associated workings. At Macedonia Spring, the boundary then returns to the Macedonia Canyon Road and follows its northwest for three miles. One-half mile north of the railroad siding of Dawes, the western boundary follows the Union Pacific Railroad track south for five miles. At the railroad siding of Hayden, the boundary trends east for seven miles excluding Globe Mine and its access road along with Tough Nut Spring and the five miles of road leading to it. The boundary then returns to the Union Pacific Railroad track and continues south for one and one-half miles until it intersects with a telephone utility line road. At this intersection, the boundary trends south for one mile then traverses southeast for four miles excluding Cornfield Spring and the access road leading to it. Returning to the telephone utility line road for one mile the boundary then trends southeast for two miles excluding Rex Mine and the road leading to it. Returning again to the telephone utility line road the boundary follows it south for one mile then follows the north edge of the road southeast to Vulcan Mine for five and one-half miles. At this point, the boundary excludes the patented Kaiser mining claims and continues east cross-country for one mile to the Providence Mountains State Recreation Area (PMSRA) boundary. The WSA boundary continues north and east for four and one-half miles and is synonymous with the west and portions of the north PMSRA boundary. The WSA boundary then follows a section line north for one mile excluding Bonanza King Mine. The boundary continues east over the northern section line of section 3, T. 10 N., R. 14 E., to the southwestern tip of section 33, T. 11N. R. 14 E., SBEM. At this point, the boundary continues north along the western edge of section 33, then traverses cross-country to the eastern edge of the road excluding Silver King Mine and portions of the access road leading to it. The boundary then drops south and east following a graded ranch road for one mile. The boundary leaves the ranch road and trends north for one mile excluding Barber Well and the access road leading to it. Returning to the ranch road and following it southeast for one mile the boundary trends north for two miles excluding Beecher Well, Domingo Spring and the roads leading to each of these sites. Approximately one mile west

of Domingo Spring, the boundary excludes the 7-IL Ranch complex and trends south and east along the 7-IL Ranch Road for one and one-half mile then trends north to exclude Bearclaw Well and its access road. Returning to the 7-IL Ranch Road, the boundary trends south for one-half mile then east and north along a graded ranch road for five miles. The boundary then intersects and follows Black Canyon road north for two miles until it intersects with Wild Horse Canyon Road which it follows west for four and one and one quarter miles until it intersects with Macedonia Canyon Road. Approximately one and one quarter mile of road located in sections 11 and 12, T. 11 N., R. 14 E., SBEM. is excluded from the WSA.

The study area lies within the heart of the East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA), designated in 1980 in conjunction with approval with the final CDCA Plan. The Providence Mountains are a horseshoe-shaped range with the open end of the range facing southeast towards Interstate 40. Contained within the center of the horseshoe is a large central valley covered by dense stands of cholla and Mojave yucca. The variety of geologic features spans the range from broad alluviated basins to limestone caverns and rhyolitic crags and peaks. Topographic relief is extreme, reaching elevations of 6,000 feet. Bold cliffs and buttress-like ridges form a striking scene. Notable topographic features include Wild Horse Mesa, one of the largest mesa surfaces in Southern California. Its lava flows are rich in iron which accounts for the dramatic color contrast of the dark base mountain with the reddish-black basaltic cap atop the mesa. Hundreds of small natural caves weathered out of the lava add unusual interest to an already scenic area.

Higher elevations are vegetated with a pinyon pine-juniper plant community while, at the lower elevations, yucca, cactus and mixed desert shrubs dominate. Diverse cactus gardens exist on the high portions of the bajadas, while the lower portions and the valleys have Mojave yucca and mixed desert shrub plant cover.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. <u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> ---	61,985	acres recommended for wilderness
	2,265	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

Ninety-seven percent suitable partial wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The remaining acreage within the nonsuitable portion of this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. In addition to the Federal acreage recommended for wilderness, BLM recommends that 2129 acres of State land, and 175 acres of private land be acquired through exchange or purchase and designated as wilderness. With acquisition of these inholdings, a total of 61,985 acres are recommended for wilderness. Appendix 1 lists all

inholdings and provides additional information on their acquisition. The remaining 2,265 acres are released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The partial wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the study area's wilderness qualities exemplify the definition of wilderness provided in the Wilderness Act, and provide uncommon primitive recreation opportunities; (2) wilderness designation would preserve in its natural state a portion of an ecological transition zone with unusual diversity of plant and animal species; (3) the partial wilderness recommendation is consistent with previous management actions and will result in the most manageable wilderness boundary; and (4) the partial wilderness recommendation will resolve conflicts between wilderness and mining.

The lands possess an outstanding primitive character exemplifying the qualities described in the definition of wilderness contained in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. Here, the "earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, and "man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Opportunities for hiking, backpacking, exploring, and other primitive types of recreation are outstanding, limited only by the stamina of the visitor. Low visitation and the screening effects of rugged topography insure ample opportunities for the seeker of solitude. The mountain peaks form the backbone of the high Mojave Desert and hold within them sensitive, natural and cultural resources. Excellent scenic quality and opportunities to view desert bighorn sheep, an occasional mountain lion, and view or hunt mule deer contribute significantly to the appeal of this primitive area. Additionally, some of the most profound and important information on the prehistory of the Mojave Desert has been derived from the archaeological work completed in the Providence Mountains. Competing resource uses involve mineral exploration, off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation use and expansion of a regional energy utility corridor.

The WSA has moderate to high potential for one or more of the following commodities: gold, silver, lead, zinc, iron, molybdenum, tungsten and limestone, with seven percent of the study area encumbered by 181 mining claims. The mining districts which cover the study area at one time were prominent silver producers made famous by the rich ore bodies of the Bonanza King Mine which produced from 1883-1887 at the rate of \$60,000 per month. The Bonanza and Silver King Mines are located immediately adjacent to the WSA border and are associated with the Providence Mountain fault zone located within the center of the study area.

The WSA is popular for general recreation and receives an estimated 1500 visitor-use days annually along the 15 miles of primitive routes within the study area. Predominant activities include OHV touring, sightseeing, rockhounding, camping, nature study and research. Routes adjacent to Wild

Horse Canyon Road, which forms the north boundary, are favored primitive campsites and receive the majority of OHV use. Because of its large size, wilderness designation of the entire area would mean a significant curtailment of motorized recreation opportunities in this region of the desert. Because wilderness values are so significant, the suitability recommendation will preclude any further vehicular use of approximately 30 miles of primitive access routes of travel.

The impacts of designating the study area as wilderness have potential to conflict with development of future communication and energy transmission facilities. Portions of the WSA and the south boundary are within four-mile to six-mile wide existing utility corridors as identified in the Western Regional Corridor Study (1980). Wilderness designation of the Providence Mountains WSA and the South Providence Mountains WSA located one-half mile south of the Providence Mountains WSA would prohibit any further development in the corridor forcing installation of new energy transmission lines in other corridors or in areas not previously disturbed. Depending upon which WSA's are ultimately designated wilderness within the CDCA, there may be constraints placed upon the long-term energy and communication transmission capabilities in the southwestern United States. Expansion of these facilities would require an amendment to the CDCA and EMNSA Plans.

Recognizing the conflicts between mineral, OHV recreation use, and wilderness resources, it was decided that the wilderness resources on 97% of the study area exceed those of competing resources. There is nothing unique about the portion of the study area recommended for nonwilderness. The landforms and ecosystems replicate areas already within or recommended for inclusion into the National Wilderness Preservation System.

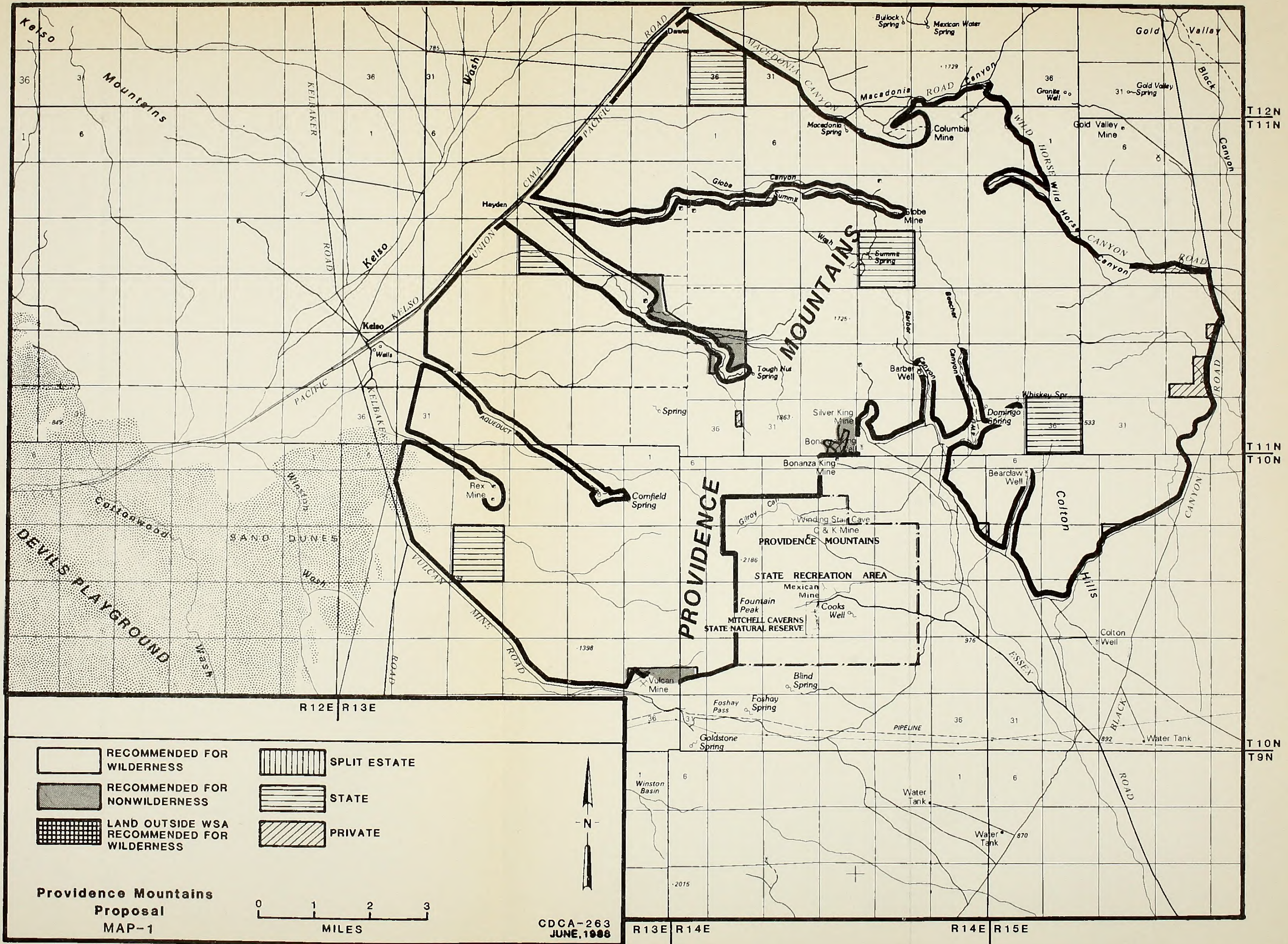


TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	61,946
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		2,242
Private		272
Total		<u>64,460</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	59,681
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>59,681</u>
Inholdings ¹		
State		2,129
Private		175
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	2,265
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>2,265</u>

¹ Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area is essentially untrammelled by man. Signs of man within the portion recommended for wilderness are archaeological features such as trails and rock shelters, posts and other monuments associated with mining claim location, prospect holes, and other minor features associated with range improvements. At present, human use of the area is moderate and visitor use tends to occur primarily one mile inside the WSA's northern boundary along Wild Horse Canyon Road where numerous primitive campsites have been utilized for the past 50 years. These campsites have little impacts on the naturalness of the area recommended for wilderness designation.

The portion of the WSA recommended for nonwilderness contains primitive routes, posts, and monuments associated within mining claim location and exploration.

2. Solitude: Opportunities for solitude, although available, are somewhat constrained by intrusions from sights and sounds outside the study area: railroad trains, a paved road with its traffic, and abandoned mining operations located within the cherrystemmed routes adjacent to the WSA.

This WSA is periodically overflown by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: These opportunities are available due to the large size of the area, the variety of landforms, and density of vegetation. Interior valleys, limestone caves, and canyons provide excellent opportunities for hiking and nature study.
4. Special Features: The Providence Mountains are a refuge for unique floral and faunal elements. Located in the transition zone between the colder Great Basin Desert to the north and the warmer Sonoran Desert to the south, the rich flora of the Providence Mountains contain many species from the Great Basin and southwestern deserts not otherwise reported for California. Over 345 species of plants are located in the study area; and the diversity of topographic, microclimatic and soil conditions results in a large number of unusual species that are endemic (i.e., restricted to a specific locality or region).

Although no Federally-listed rare, threatened, or endangered plants or State of California designated rare or endangered plants occur within the WSA boundary, two BLM sensitive plants identified as candidates for listing as endangered or threatened by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (1988) occur within the study area. They are: Penstemon stephensii (Stephens' beardtongue) and Coryphantha vivipara var. alversonii (Foxtail cactus). Additionally, two unusual plant assemblages (UPA's) occur within the study area. In order of sensitivity as classified by the CDCA Plan they are:

- (1) Vegetation Associated with Seeps and Springs: This UPA is classified as highly sensitive due to its extreme rarity in the CDCA and its importance to the survival of desert wildlife. It is found at several locations within the WSA.
- (2) Basic Rupicola Assemblage: This UPA is associated with limestone and dolomite outcroppings and is found throughout the study area wherever lime or basic rocks are exposed. This UPA is classified as highly sensitive due to the large number of endemic plant species for which it is noted. Populations of three species listed by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) as rare in California, but common elsewhere occur in the Providence Mountains. They are Celtis reticulata (desert hackberry), Eriogonum heermannii var. floccosum (Clark Mountain buckwheat), and Fendlerella utahensis (yerba desierto).

The diverse vegetation and numerous springs support an abundance of wildlife. The rugged mountains of the WSA provide ideal habitat for an estimated 50 desert bighorn sheep, a BLM sensitive species in California. Other significant mammals include the mountain lion, mule deer, bobcat, porcupine, spotted skunk, rock squirrel, and Panamint chipmunk. Perhaps as many as 50 species of resident vertebrates could be considered significant or sensitive from a biological standpoint. Among the most significant reptiles are the western red-tailed skink, western blind snake, Sonora lyre snake, and desert striped whipsnake. The regal ringneck snake is rare, and although not recorded within the Providence Mountains, could be expected to occur there. Within the State of California, the extremely rare banded gila monster has been sighted at only four locations. One of these confirmed sightings occurred within the Providence Mountains WSA.

The Providence Mountains offer superb woodland habitats for a rich and diverse avifauna. The list is impressive, and the most significant species include the Warbling Vireo, the Bendire's Thrasher, Harris and Swainson's Hawks, and Virginia's Warbler. The presence of these species is unusual in the desert as they are adapted primarily to more moist habitats. For most of these species, the pinyon-oak woodlands represent a unique "island" habitat. Their occurrence and significance in the California Desert are due to the presence of isolated montane refugia such as the Providence Mountains.

The WSA encompasses one of the most intensively used areas, by prehistoric inhabitants, in the Mojave Desert. The diversity of vegetation and wildlife in the WSA accounts for the intensity of use. Ethnographic evidence documents the use of the Providence Mountains, Wild Horse Mesa and Wild Horse Canyon by Chemehuevi Indians. Archaeological evidence strongly indicates use of the mountain by Mohaves and earlier inhabitants as long as 10,000 years ago. Ancient rock art in the form of carvings and paintings can be found in formerly occupied rock shelters and near springs used by past dwellers. Whole pottery, baskets, stone tools, sacred objects of religion, and other remnants of the Native American material culture have been found. The Providence Mountains were used by Native American people for the hunting of bighorn sheep and deer. Hunting base camps occupied by the prehistoric hunters and their families have been uncovered by archaeologists in recent years. Enclaves of base and temporary camps can be found throughout the lower elevations of the Providence Mountains and Wild Horse Canyon. From these base camps, women and children would gather and process native food-bearing plants in the area. There is some evidence that Native Americans farmed squash, watermelon and corn in the Providence Mountains.

The area continues to be an important research area for numerous academic institutions. The California Desert Plan estimates that 31.5 square miles of highly sensitive archaeological concerns and 32 square miles of highly sensitive areas are located within the boundaries of the WSA.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System
(NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 23,577 acres of the American Desert/Creosote bush (Larrea) ecosystem and 38,369 acres of the American Desert/Juniper-pinyon woodland (Juniperus-Pinus) ecosystems. The Providence Mountains are a unique ecosystem and provide habitat for a specialized group of plants and animals, many of which are indigenous to this area and occur nowhere else (See Special Features).

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification <u>Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,244,669
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	24	669,290
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,630,865
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	16	448,039

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of seven major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Oxnard-Ventura	23	2,195,198	85	2,703,260
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
San Diego	15	1,043,680	100	3,378,814
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The closest designated wilderness is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 115 miles south. Ten BLM study areas recommended for wilderness designation are within 50 air miles of the Providence Mountains, one in Nevada's Las Vegas District and nine in the California Desert District.

C. Manageability

The Providence Mountains WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, several issues should be addressed which affect manageability of the area as wilderness.

Manageability would be improved if the non-Federal inholdings are acquired. Acquisition will assure that activities incompatible with wilderness management do not occur. Another factor affecting manageability is the large number of active mining claims. Based on the mineral potential of the area, at least a portion of these claims would likely be found valid, allowing development to occur. Mineral development would preclude BLM's ability to maintain naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation at their existing levels.

Wild Horse Canyon Road forms portions of the northwest boundary. This unmaintained dirt road and adjacent turn-outs are used extensively by recreationists, research institutions and hunters for OHV access to primitive campsites. Designation of the Providence Mountains WSA would prohibit all vehicle access to the campsites located immediately south of the road, leaving only the area north of the road open for such uses. Enforcement of this boundary may require barrier construction of some type to adequately close off all access ways leading south of the road. An alternative to Wild Horse Canyon Road as the wilderness boundary is to move the boundary 300-500 feet south of the road. This would eliminate the need for construction of barriers, require only minimal signing, and allow recreationists and research institutions continued vehicle access to primitive sites located adjacent to routes of travel. This alternative would be consistent with existing management guidelines outlined in the EMNSA Plan. The acreage removed from the proposed wilderness area by adoption of this alternative approximates 109 acres or less than .02 of 1% of the total acreage of the WSA.

The entire study area is contained within two pre-FLPMA grazing leases. Because grazing is a grandfathered use, existing or future conflicts are not anticipated. However, vehicle use for routine maintenance of existing range improvements and any improvements installed after designation would be constrained by wilderness designation.

Portions of two pre-FLPMA rights-of-way belonging to the Union Pacific Railroad and Southern California Edison are within the study area. Maintenance of their existing facilities will alter the naturalness and solitude of the area. The Bureau is requesting that these rights-of-way be excluded from the area designated as wilderness.

Portions of the south boundary coincide with the Providence Mountain State Recreation Area boundary. This area will be managed in conjunction with the State of California.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Providence Mountains WSA is located in the BLM Providence Mountains Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The G-E-M information in the wilderness portion of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) stated that mineral resources in the WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated and interpreted at the time of the recommendation process. The EIS did indicate that 20 known occurrences of gold, copper, uranium, lead, tungsten, and silver were known to occur in the WSA. They included major past producers. Three occurrences of limestone were also cited. As of December 1979, there were 174 unpatented and seven patented mining claims located in the study area.

Review of the GRA file found that the information available in 1980 was very limited. The mineral and/or mine occurrence map in the GRA file did indicate that a high interest in this area for mineral production and/or exploration had occurred in the past.

The WSA falls within three old mining districts: The Providence Mountains (Brightwood) District, the Gold Belt District, and the Trojan/Providence District.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Recommendation: Mineral surveys were conducted for the WSA by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) during the period from 1982-1984. BOM released the results of their Mineral Land Assessment (MLA) in 1986 in open file report MLA 47-86. In 1987, a preliminary draft summarizing the joint results of the USGS and BOM surveys was obtained by BLM from the USGS Bulletin 1712-D.

BOM examined 714 workings and outcrops for their study of the WSA. This included 467 in the WSA and 237 just outside the WSA boundary. These sites were grouped into 162 properties. BOM found gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, and molybdenum occur in the WSA. Significant tungsten values were found just north of the study area.

Twelve properties in or near the WSA produced 6,425 tons of ore containing 300 ounces of gold, 92,000 ounces of silver, 25,000 table pounds of copper, 72,000 pounds of lead, and 2,300 pounds of zinc. The Vulcan Mine-Burro prospect on the south boundary of the WSA produced 2,643,000 long tons of iron ore and remaining ore reserves extending into the WSA are estimated at 5.7 million long tons of high-grade iron ore. Eight properties in or on the

boundary of the study area contain approximately 310,000 tons of identified gold and silver resources, with individual deposits ranging from 10,000 to 110,000 tons of ore. Small deposits of gold (500 to 3,700 tons), silver-lead (1300 tons), and silica (9,900 tons) were identified. Two properties were found to contain 340,000 long tons of iron resources grading 50-60 percent iron per ton. Also identified were "voluminous" deposits of limestone, dolomite, sand and gravel, and stone. The area is known for its limestone caves and Mitchell Caverns State Park is located adjacent to the south boundary of the study area.

In the joint report (USGS Bulletin 1712-D), two large areas in the central portion and two smaller areas in the eastern portion of the WSA were classified by the USGS as having a high or moderate potential for gold, silver, lead, zinc, iron, molybdenum and tungsten. Except for two isolated zones in the western portion, the remaining portion of the study area was classified as having a low potential for gold and silver. This USGS classification is based on development potential. Under the BLM mineral occurrence classification system, the USGS moderate and high potential areas are classified as high potential for the occurrence of these minerals. The USGS low potential area is classified under the BLM system as moderate potential for occurrence. Map 2 reflects the BLM classification of mineral resources based on the USGS and BOM report.

The WSA is not within an area classified by the BLM as prospectively valuable for geothermal or leasing minerals. The USGS and BOM report shows that the northwestern boundary of the WSA has an unknown potential for oil and gas (BLM unclassified potential).

The geologic map and a report in the California Division of Mines and Geology Bulletin 170, Chapter 4, by John C. Hazard on the Rocks and Structures of the Northern Providence Mountains verifies the existence of large limestone deposits in the study area. One mineral commodity not identified in the USGS map was the large limestone deposit identified in the reports. These deposits are well documented in both the BOM and USGS reports and have a high potential for occurrence under the BLM classification system.

Mineral industry interest in exploration and development both in and surrounding this WSA has been continuous since 1900 as evidence by over 1200 mining claims located during that period.

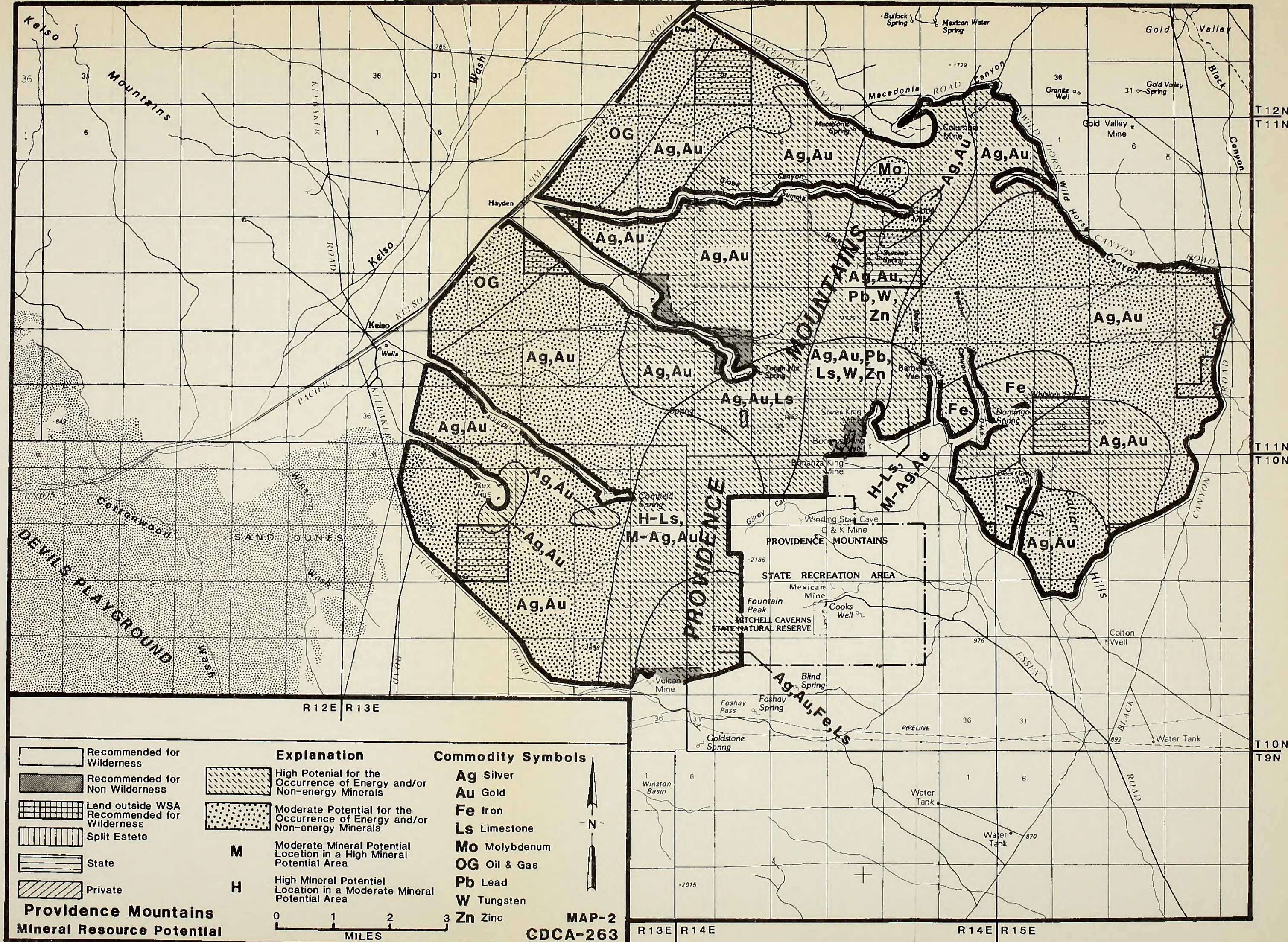
In 1985, a mining plan of operation for exploration in the WSA was approved by the BLM. Unpatented lode mining claims appear to be concentrated in the western, southern, eastern, and northwestern portions of the study area. Active unpatented mining claims in the WSA are summarized in the following table taken from BLM records dated January, 1988.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE MINING CLAIM	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	174	0	0	3,480	0	3,480
Placer	7	0	7	280	0	280
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	181	0	7	3,760	0	3,760

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values will be maintained on 97% of the WSA recommended for wilderness designation, if non-Federal inholdings and valid mineral rights are acquired. If not acquired, development of private land and valid mining claims will result in site-specific adverse impacts to wilderness values. On three percent of the WSA, naturalness will gradually decline over the long term from the cumulative effects of continued mineral exploration and development.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Ninety-seven percent of the WSA will be withdrawn from mineral entry. Development of existing claims will be subject to proof of a valid discovery. There will be no impact to existing opportunities for mineral exploration and development on three percent of the WSA. Exploration and development will be allowed to continue, subject to regulations stated in 43 CFR 3809 regarding surface disturbances, as well as any additional constraints stated in the CDCA and EMNSA Plans.
3. Impact on Sensitive Plant and Wildlife Species: The unusual plant assemblages and wildlife species are located within the area recommended for wilderness. Some site-specific impacts to habitat may occur as a result of development of valid mining claims.
4. Impact on Motorized Recreation: Motorized recreation use will be eliminated on 15 miles of routes within the study area.
5. Impact on Accessibility of Southern California Edison and Union Pacific Railroad Rights-of-Way: These companies can continue to access their rights-of-way for maintenance and other purposes as they do at present.
6. Impact on Development/Expansion of Regional Utility Transmission Facilities: Expansion of these facilities are discouraged within the EMNSA. A CDCA Plan Amendment would be required prior to authorization for expansion of these facilities.



**Providence Mountains
Mineral Resource Potential**

<p> Recommended for Wilderness</p> <p> Recommended for Non Wilderness</p> <p> Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness</p> <p> Split Estate</p> <p> State</p> <p> Private</p>	<p>Explanation</p> <p> High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals</p> <p> Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals</p> <p>M Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area</p> <p>H High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area</p>	<p>Commodity Symbols</p> <p>Ag Silver</p> <p>Au Gold</p> <p>Fe Iron</p> <p>Ls Limestone</p> <p>Mo Molybdenum</p> <p>OG Oil & Gas</p> <p>Pb Lead</p> <p>W Tungsten</p> <p>Zn Zinc</p>
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0 1 2 3
MILES

MAP-2
CDCA-263

7. Impact on Cultural Resources: Exploration, research, and excavation of the proposed wilderness area's cultural resources will be restricted somewhat by prohibition of vehicle use and constraints on site excavation. Cultural resource preservation will be enhanced by limitations on surface disturbance, but possible increased frequency of use by wilderness enthusiasts may lead to some disturbance of sites. The proposed action will have no effect on the cultural resources of the remaining three percent of the study area.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Many comments were received. The majority of those that addressed inventory criteria supported the proposed Wilderness Study Area boundaries. Roads and mining activity received further field checks and were excluded from the study area, where appropriate.
2. Study Phase: This WSA generated 82 letters of comment, with 48 favoring multiple-use designation. Half of these were in the form of a checklist provided by a recreation organization. They noted camping, four-wheel driving, hunting, trail-riding, motorcycling, photography, hiking, rockhounding, and hunting as some of the activities in the area which require vehicle access. They felt that the area is best for four-wheel driving, motorcycling, and family camping. The area is said to be one of the few places which local residents enjoy good hunting.

Some respondents requested that access be provided for mineral exploration and extraction in the Trojan mining district. Evidence for mineralization was given as the past history of mines; gold, silver, zinc, lead, copper, and iron. It was stated that thirty percent of the desert is already withdrawn from mineral entry, and that the wilderness designation process relies heavily on a hasty mineral analysis.

Sights and sounds which some respondents claim detract from the wilderness experience include aircraft overflights, a railroad to the west, lights of cities visible at night, tourist activities at Mitchell's Caverns, powerlines and pipelines with maintenance roads in the south. One respondent described the railroad noise as amplified in the area because of steep grades and high bluffs.

Supporters of wilderness designation (34 comments) were enthusiastic, mentioning outstanding geological and ecological significance. Extremely varied flora and fauna were said to exist here, including bobcats, bighorn sheep, prairie falcon, golden eagles, a "great cactus bloom area," including mound cactus and old man cactus at higher elevations, pinyon, cedar, pygmy agave, and eight rare and endangered species (not identified). Other features cited include extensive evidence of aboriginal occupation, a wide variety of scenery and terrain, petrified wood of the ancient sequoia, fossils of invertebrates, the historic "Old Mojave Trail" (not within the WSA), superior areas for rockclimbing and cave exploring, and pinnacles of volcanic tufa. This "special blend in the desert" should be consolidated with WSAs 262, 264, 265, and 266 for a New York-Providence Mountains Wilderness Area, according to some comments. Other suggestions included management of the area as a primitive recreation area, bighorn habitat area, or part of an East Mojave National Park. Also mentioned were the presence of the Desert Scenic Natural Trail, the need to eliminate or redesign the Mid Hills campground (not within the WSA), and the damage which has been done to Wild Horse Canyon by overgrazing.

Several comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). Comments included a recommendation for a boundary adjustment; a pro-wilderness stance (unique, geology, bighorn sheep habitat); and the suggestion that the Vulcan mining claim needs a half-mile buffer zone between it and wilderness.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: A variety of comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. The National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-road vehicle groups, recommended that the area be designated unsuitable, Classes M (medium use) or L (limited use). Many club members supported this position by sending in printed coupons or letters. Conservation-oriented groups favored wilderness classification for the entire WSA. Some respondents wanted this WSA combined with WSAs 262 and 264 to make one large wilderness area. The Southern California Gas Company requested that the boundary be moved to at least 100 feet from the edges of their rights-of-way to provide adequate access for maintenance.
4. Proposed Plan: Many comments were received from respondents who wanted this area recommended as wilderness and from those who wanted it designated Class L or Class M. Reasons were the same as those given above.

5. Comments received during Draft EMNSA Plan: Comments received in 1987 from Kaiser Steel Corporation addressed concerns on their patented and unpatented mining claims should the area be designated as wilderness. Kaiser Steel Corporation owns five patented lode claims and a mill site and holds twelve unpatented lode claims in sections 25, 26, and 36, T. 10 N., R. 13 E., SBBM. The property was located as the Vulcan Mine in 1907. From 1942-47, a total of 2,643,000 long tons of high-grade iron ore was produced from the Vulcan open pit mine. The ore contributed significantly to the war effort being the primary source of ore for Kaiser's Fontana steel mill. That mill, in turn, produced the bulk of the steel required for construction of the Liberty and Victory ships, naval transport vessels needed to transport men and war materials during World War II. Since cessation of active mining in 1947, the property has been an intermittent source of iron ore for the cement manufacturing industry as well as a source of rip rap for erosion control along public roadways in the general area. Prior to the closure of Kaiser's blast furnaces at Fontana, Kaiser was the principal supplier of iron ore concentrates to the cement manufacturing industry of southern California. Those concentrates were derived from the mining and concentrating of low-grade ores at Eagle Mountain which has also suspended operations.

By comparison, the Vulcan property contains large ore reserves of massive magnetite located in close proximity to the mainline of the Union Pacific Railroad at Kelso and to Interstate 40 for truck transport to cement manufacturing sites.

Kaiser is greatly concerned with the boundary which is in close proximity to the north wall of the Vulcan pit. The WSA boundary lies along the northern limit of Kaiser's patented claims. The three unpatented claims, Vulcan 21-23 lie within the WSA and future expansion of mining to the north of the existing pit would be hampered. Further, with the WSA boundary along the northern limits of the patented claims, as the ore body dips to the north, Kaiser may be denied its extralateral rights in pursuing the ore bodies down. Kaiser requested the re-siting of the south boundary to more northerly limits thereby providing Kaiser with a buffer between the area subject to development and the area recommended for designation.

No comments were received from local governments.

APPENDIX 1
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION
PROVIDENCE MOUNTAINS WSA (CDCA-263)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				TOTAL ACREAGE	NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	
	TWNSHP	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN			SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)
1	11N.	15E.	18	SBM	20	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	2.0	2.5
2	11N.	15E.	17	SBM	20	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	2.0	2.5
3	11N.	15E.	17	SBM	20	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	2.0	2.5
4	11N.	15E.	20	SBM	20	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
5	11N.	15E.	29	SBM	100	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
6	11N.	13E.	36	SBM	40	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	4.0	2.5
7	11N.	13E.	16	SBM	240	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
8	11N.	14E.	16	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
9	11N.	14E.	36	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
10	10N.	13E.	25	SBM	10	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	1.0	2.5
11	10N.	13E.	16	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
12	12N.	13E.	36	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0

These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.

Mid Hills

CDCA 264

MID HILLS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-264)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 17,819 acres

The Mid Hills WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 16,979 acres of public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 643 acres of lands belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totaling approximately 197 acres. No split-estate lands exist within the WSA boundaries (See Map 1 and Table 1).

The study area boundaries follow a combination of graded and paved roads. Beginning one half of a mile south of Eight Mile Tank, the WSA's western boundary follows Kelso-Cima Road south for four miles. Just north of the railroad siding at Dawes, the boundary heads east for six miles following the route through Macedonia Canyon until it intersects with Wild Horse Canyon Road. At this point, the boundary turns north following a well-travelled route for six miles until it intersects with Cedar Canyon Wash and the gas pipeline road. The north boundary is the gas pipeline except where it leaves the pipeline to cherrystem the roads to Wildcat, Chicken Water, Bullock, and Mexican Springs.

All of the study area is within the 1.5 million acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated by the Secretary of the Interior in conjunction with approval of the California Desert Plan in 1980. The Mid Hills WSA is a high elevation isthmus connecting the Providence Mountains and the New York Mountains. The WSA consists of low, rolling mountainous terrain with elevations ranging from 3100 feet on the western bajada to 5600 feet atop Columbia Mountain. Dominant vegetation types include creosote bush-mixed desert shrub, Mojave yucca-buckhorn cholla, Great Basin sagebrush, blackbrush and pinon-juniper associations. Washes are generally dominated by catclaw. No Federal or State listed rare, threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species are known to occur in this WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan, protection, use, balanced, and no action, and a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0	acres recommended for wilderness
16,979	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

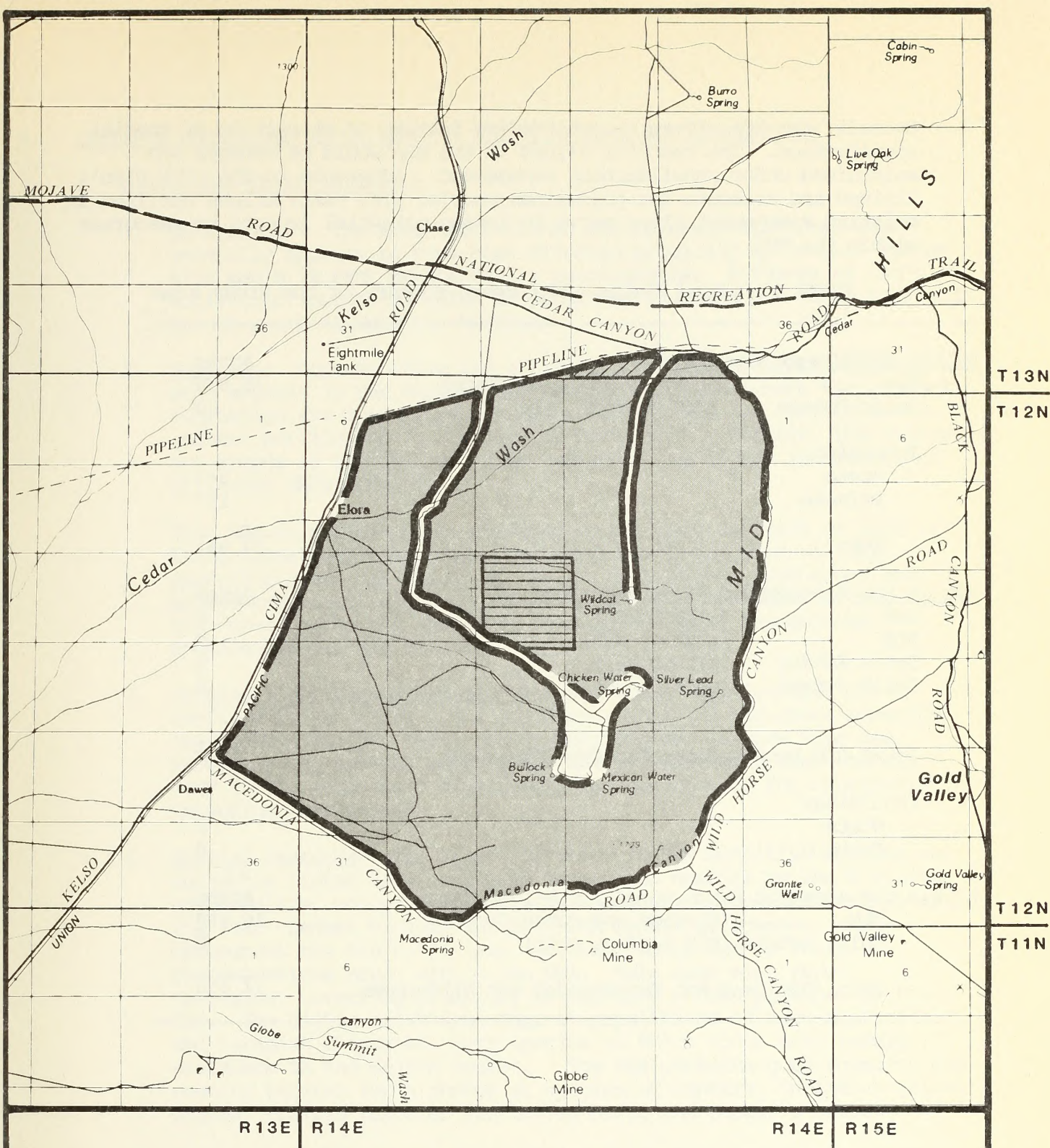
The addition of the Mid Hills WSA to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) would not add to the diversity or uniqueness of the system, nor would it add significantly to the wilderness recreation opportunities available in the region. The WSA receives moderate recreational use and is currently used for hunting, nature study and camping. The WSA contains some of the better mule deer habitat and populations in San Bernardino County, resulting in a tremendous use of the area during deer hunting season. Utilization of the WSA is dependent upon motorized vehicles for access. There are approximately 25 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

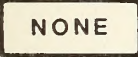


The landforms and ecosystems exhibited by the study area are represented in other areas identified for wilderness preservation. Three nearby WSAs, North Providence, one fourth of a mile south; Castle Peaks, 15 miles northeast; and Kingston Mountains 25 miles north, contain a combined total of over 100,000 acres which BLM is recommending for wilderness designation. All are mountainous and all contain examples of the same type of ecosystems found in the Mid Hills WSA.


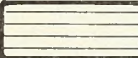

The naturalness and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation only minimally meet the criteria defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. Because the study area is bordered by the Union Pacific Railroad line, Kelso-Cima Road and the well travelled Cedar Canyon Road, it is difficult to escape the sights and sounds of civilization. The WSA lies adjacent to one of only two developed campgrounds within the EMNSA. The WSA is nearly bisected by the road to Mexican Water Spring allowing vehicle use into the heart of the WSA which further reduce the opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

The WSA has a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, copper, lead and molybdenum deposits. Numerous small mines are in existence within the eastern portion of the WSA. Along the western boundary, extraction of sand and gravel may prove to be critical in the long term for maintenance and stabilization of the railroad dikes and for resurfacing of Interstates 15 and 40 which lie 30 miles north and south of the WSA. Existing reserves are being depleted and the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) is actively searching for quality material sites that are within an economical hauling distance from the freeway (see Energy and Mineral Resource Values).

Protection of wilderness values and other resource values is being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the EMNSA Plan completed in 1988. These actions include restrictions on the use of firearms, closure of additional routes of travel including portions of the route which forms the eastern boundary and enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas.

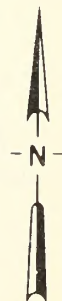


- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
|  | NONE | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS | |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
|  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | STATE |
|  | PRIVATE |

**Mid Hills
Proposal
MAP-1**

0 1 2 3
MILES



CDCA-264
JUNE, 1988

Overall, the WSA offers no outstanding feature or attraction of special significance. The resource values in the WSA would be managed and maintained under nonwilderness management. Adherence to the CDCA Plan's limited and moderate use guidelines coupled with restrictions outlined in existing management plans serve to lessen potential impacts to resources within the WSA.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	16,979
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		643
Private		197
Total		<u>17,819</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	16,979
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>16,979</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The area has retained its primeval character and generally appears to have been affected primarily by natural forces with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable. Evidence of man's activities include 15 miles of primitive routes and a water tank and trough south of Columbia Mountain.
2. Solitude: Opportunities are available throughout the WSA but are more evident in the eastern and southern portions where terrain and vegetation are more dense. These opportunities are limited in the eastern portion due to the lack of screening by terrain, the sights and sounds of the railroad line and noise and lights from vehicles utilizing Kelso-Cima Road.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: These opportunities are confined to the eastern and southern rim of the WSA where numerous canyons and rolling hills effectively screen visitors from one another. The eastern half of the WSA is relatively flat and has very little vegetation disallowing the opportunity for outstanding unconfined recreation.
4. Special Features: The desert tortoise, a BLM sensitive species and currently listed as a candidate threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, occurs on the bajada encompassing the western 1/3 of the WSA. Desert bighorn sheep, a BLM sensitive species, range throughout the Mid Hills area, although there are no known concentrations areas within the WSA. Mule deer also range throughout occurring primarily in the more wooded portions of the WSA. The higher elevations support populations of rock squirrels and Panamint chipmunks, both species of which occur only rarely elsewhere in the Mojave desert. The WSA contains good foraging and nesting habitat for a number of species of raptors, including golden eagles, prairie falcons, red-tailed hawks and Cooper's hawks.

A portion of the Round Valley Sagebrush Unusual Plant Assemblage occurs in the eastern one-third of the WSA.

The study area bears extensive archaeological evidence of prehistoric human use. Within the 1300 acres surveyed to date, 54 sites have been located. The WSA includes extensively used campsites which appear to have served as hunting base camps and temporary campsites. Certain areas contain deep deposits of soil

containing cultural material, indicating occupation occurred repeatedly over long periods of time. Many caves in the study area provided shelter for temporary habitation, as illustrated by fire-blackened ceilings, charcoal, and rock art. Stone tools, knives and pottery fragments have also been found.

A pipe made of vesicular basalt indicates probable ritual or ceremonial use of the study area. Contemporary Native American ritual use continues. Springs throughout the WSA are believed to have ritual and healing powers. The WSA has been a traditional Chemehuevi and Mohave hunting area.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 16,979 acres of the American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon woodland ecosystem. Designation of the study area would not contribute any additional unique or distinct features to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Other suitably recommended WSA's throughout the EMNSA and the CDCA offer a more extensive and diverse representation of desert wilderness values.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	24	690,132
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	16	468,881

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five hour drive of five major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of nine BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 100 miles southwest of the Mid Hills WSA.

C. Manageability

The Mid Hills WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, several issues complicate the management of the area as wilderness. Conflicting resource uses include traditional off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, mineral potential and valid existing rights. The cumulative effects of the conflicting uses makes it difficult to assure that wilderness values can be maintained.

Designation would preclude vehicle access on the 15 miles of primitive routes currently approved for use. An estimated 500 visitor use days primarily devoted to hunting and sightseeing would be displaced to areas outside of the WSA resulting in an enforcement problem to ensure that the routes are not used.

The 32 mining claims within the WSA are located on seven percent of the WSA lands and primarily concentrated in the southern portion of the WSA. Although no plans of operation have been filed to date, it is highly probable that these claims would prove valid and development would occur resulting in a gradual decline of already less than outstanding wilderness values.

Two Pre-FLPMA rights-of-way exist within the WSA and include the Southern California Gas pipeline right-of-way and the Union Pacific Railroad line right-of-way. Maintenance of these two rights-of-way would continue to alter the natural character of the lands.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

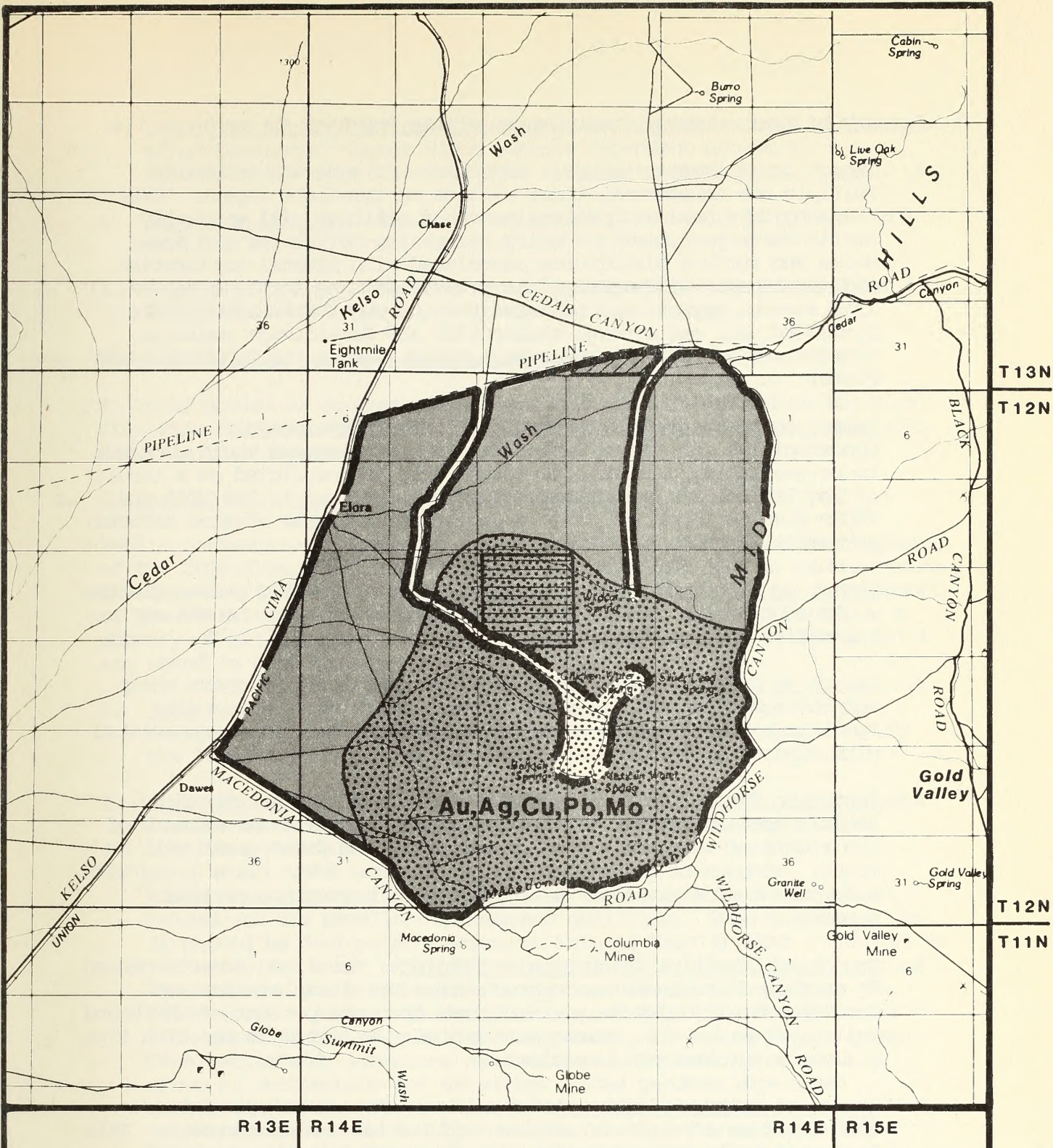
1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The mineral resource data for the Mid Hills WSA was not fully analyzed, integrated and interpreted at the time of the recommendation process in 1980. This assessment of mineral localities showed small, scattered base and precious metal mines throughout the eastern half of the Mid Hills WSA. Perhaps two of these mines may have had past production, but the amount or type of ore produced was not recorded in the GRA file at the time of the recommendation.
2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Decision: No U.S. Geological Survey or Bureau of Mines mineral survey was conducted for this WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. However, the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) completed a mineral resource assessment of the Mid Hills (15') quadrangle in 1984-85. This report, OFR 85-81A, provides more detailed mineral resource potential data for the WSA than was presented in the BLM G-E-M assessment.

As indicated on the accompanying map, the southeast portion of the WSA has a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, copper, lead and molybdenum deposits. The potential is based upon the occurrence of approximately ten small unnamed mines in the east half of the WSA which have developed gold-quartz veins. At least five of these small quartz vein mines are located within or adjacent to the north trending Providence Mountain fault zone, along the eastern boundary of the WSA. These northeast trending shear zones consist of one or more quartz veins three feet to five feet wide and contain gold and copper with minor lead, silver and molybdenum mineralization. The shears are mainly in Cretaceous plutonic rocks composed of porphyritic quartz monzonite and Precambrian gneiss.

Unpatented mining claims in the WSA are summarized in the following table taken from BLM records dated December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	15	15	N/A	300	300
Placer	N/A	17	17	N/A	680	680
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	32	32	N/A	980	980



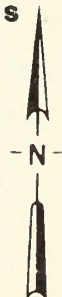
- NONE** Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness**
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness**
- Split Estate**
- State**
- Private**

Explanation

- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals**
- Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals**
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- Ag** Silver
- Au** Gold
- Cu** Copper
- Mo** Molybdenum
- Pd** Lead



Mid Hills
Mineral Resource Potential

0 1 3
MILES

MAP-2
CDCA-264

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Under low and moderate intensity multiple use management, there will be no immediate impact. Over the long-term, existing naturalness and solitude will gradually decline with projected gradually increasing OHV use of the area. Noise and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development will result in a gradual decline in these values. This adverse impact will be localized and considered minor overall since OHV use, and mineral exploration and development would be constrained by existing management guidelines in the EMNSA and CDCA Plans.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available. Mining activities would be restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines outlined in the CDCA and EMNSA Plans which limit vehicle access and mitigate adverse effects on sensitive resource values.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the EMNSA Plan.
4. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep Habitat: Impacts to Bighorn sheep and their habitat will be negligible, consisting of minor site specific habitat loss as a result of surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development.
5. Impact on Desert Tortoise Habitat: Localized impacts caused by vehicle use and surface disturbance associated with maintenance of the rights-of-ways and mineral exploration and development will be minor. Management guidelines in the CDCA and EMNSA Plans along with enforcement of State laws will provide for protection of this species.
6. Impact on Sensitive Plant Species/Habitat: Localized impacts caused by surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development will adversely affect less than one percent of the Round Valley Sagebrush UPA. Management guidelines listed in the CDCA Plan will help protect this species.
7. Impact on Cultural Resources: Some loss of archaeological values will occur as a result of mineral exploration and development. This loss will be localized, primarily concentrated in the areas of moderate mineral potential comprising 50% of the WSA. Existing Federal laws and BLM policy along with restrictions outlined in existing management plans will lessen the magnitude of this loss by requiring extensive mitigation or avoidance of any impacts to these sites.

8. Impact on Native American Concerns: The proposed action will have a minor beneficial impact since vehicle dependent access to traditionally used sites would be allowed to continue.
9. Impact on Grazing: The existing grazing use would be allowed to continue subject to the restrictions outlined in the AMP.
10. Impact on Hunting: Hunting would be allowed to continue subject to State laws and restrictions outlined in EMNSA Plan.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Most comments supported the findings. A few mentioned the existence of roads which had not been recognized by the inventory.
2. Study Phase: Of the 19 comments received on this WSA, 12 favored further study of the area as wilderness, while seven preferred continued multiple use management.

Wilderness proponents noted the area's geological and ecological values and its excellent wilderness qualities. Some suggested that it should be designated a Research Natural Area or that it should be set aside for study of ecology, natural history and biology and as a space for solitude and retreats for individuals and groups. The pinon-juniper forest was described as outstanding and eight rare or endangered plants were said to be present, including Mojave grama, Cina rattleweed, limestone penstemon and Stephens penstemon. A grove of cottonwoods and extensive cactus gardens were also mentioned. This unit provides habitat for the desert bighorn, the regal ringtail snake and the prairie falcon. The southern Mid Hills Mountains contain valuable archaeological sites.

Several letters mentioned the variety of types of wilderness recreation which can be enjoyed in this area, such as hunting, spelunking, hiking, rockclimbing, nature study and photography. One respondent stated that a proposed Desert National Scenic Trail passes through the area.

Opponents of wilderness designation mentioned various features which, to them, made the area unsuitable for wilderness. The Union Pacific Railroad, aircraft overflights, cattle truck traffic, and roads to wells, mines, springs and a campground were mentioned. Respondents wanted the continuance of activities such as mining, grazing and motorcycling. High grade gold ore was said to exist in the Macedonia-Summit Canyon region and access was desired for further exploration.

One comments was received in response to the Public Input Workbook. It recommended that the western boundary be moved two to three miles away from the Cima road and the railroad tracks.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: Most comments which specifically mentioned WSA 264 were from conservation oriented organizations. The respondents favored the Protection Alternative, which recommended wilderness designation for the Mid Hills. The Balanced Alternative, which recommended wilderness designation for only a strip of this WSA was opposed by most of these respondents who generally wanted wilderness for the entire chain of mountains from the Providence to the New Yorks.

This was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. A large number of club members sent in letters or printed coupons supporting a recommendation of "limited use" for part of the WSA and "moderate use" for the rest of it. NOC's proposal was closest to the Use Alternative.

4. Proposed Plan: Conservation organizations and their members, particularly those who were promoting a Mojave National Park, strongly opposed the recommendation of the Proposed Plan to make this area "limited use" instead of wilderness. The WSA was considered to be an essential part of a linear block of high quality wilderness cutting across the eastern Mojave. The Mid Hills were said to provide a transition between the Providence and New York Mountains' their lower elevation rolling hills containing excellent wildlife values. The terrain and availability of spring water make this area excellent for hunting, hiking and other forms of primitive recreation. Many letters were received supporting this position. The California State Department of Resources made an identical recommendation.

Scattered responses were received from the National Outdoor Coalition and similar groups, as well as the mining community. Their positions were the same as for the Draft Plan Alternatives.

No comments were received from local government.

New York Mountains

CDCA 265

NEW YORK MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-265)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

46,605 acres

The New York Mountains WSA is located in San Bernardino County within the eastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA is situated near the Nevada border approximately 100 miles southwest of Las Vegas, Nevada. The WSA includes 43,980 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1,295 acres of land belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totaling approximately 1,330 acres. No split-estate land exists within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

WSA boundaries follow a combination of paved roads, section lines and topography. Beginning at the northern tip of the study area heading east to west, the north boundary follows the Union Pacific Railroad line right-of-way for ten miles excluding two previously disturbed areas from the WSA. These exclusions include the patented mining claims leading from the railroad siding of Brant and Sacaton Spring and their associated maintenance roads. At the town of Cima, the boundary traverses southeast following a graded ranch road for approximately three miles to the Death Valley Mine. At this point, the boundary continues east for three miles, cherrystemming Death Valley Mine and the graded roads to Cottonwood and Cabin springs and a microwave relay station located in T. 13N., R. 15E., Section 6, SBEM. The boundary then returns to the graded ranch road and follows it south for two miles excluding Live Oak Spring and its associated access road. Two miles south of Live Oak Spring the boundary trends east skirting the northern berm of the county maintained Cedar Canyon Road for five and one half miles. At this point the boundary trends northeast following section lines for ten miles excluding private lands, previously disturbed areas and patented mining claims. The remaining southeastern boundary follows one quarter mile west of the road to Caruthers Canyon excluding the patented mining claims associated with Giant Ledge Mine and then follows the ridgeline north for one mile until it meets the road to Keystone Spring. The eastern boundary follows this road east for two miles excluding Lecyr Well then follows Ivanpah Road northeast for four miles to the edge of the Vanderbilt mining claims. The boundary then leaves Ivanpah Road and follows a combination of sections lines and topography heading west and north until it intersects with the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way which forms the northern boundary.

Several special designations overlay the New York Mountains WSA. The study area is completely within the 1.5 million acre East Mojave National Area (EMNSA) designated in 1980 by the Secretary of the Interior as part of the CDCA plan. Sixty percent of the study area is also within the New York Mountains Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and ten percent of the study area is designated as an Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) with 575 acres formally segregated from mineral entry.

The WSA contains 40% hills, 35% fans, 15% mountains, 5% pediments, 3% dissected fans and 2% plateaus. The New York Mountains, trending northeast to the Nevada border, encompass a rugged interior of buff-colored, granitic rocks and boulders. The mountains are characterized by a steep, sharply eroded north face, and a more gently sloping south flank carved out by long canyons such as Fourth of July and Caruthers Canyons. Elevations range from 3,800 feet to over 7,500 feet.

The WSA contains a representation of life zones similar to other high elevation areas within the Mojave Desert. Vegetation is dominated by pinyon-juniper woodlands, grading into Joshua tree and Great Basin sagebrush associations on the lower elevations. Sensitive plant and animal species found within the study area are replicated in adjacent areas recommended for wilderness designation. One species of management concern occurs within the study area. Thorne's Buckwheat, (*Erigonium ericifolium* var. *thornei*) is a State listed endangered plant species as well as a candidate for listing as an endangered species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). This species has been recorded in two locations within Fourth of July Canyon and in one location within Cliff Canyon. Investigations to date have not discovered the existence of any Federally listed rare, threatened or endangered plant or animal species.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of FLPMA and was included in the CDCA Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) finalized in 1980. Four alternatives were analyzed by the Draft and Final EIS's for the CDCA Plan, protection, use, balanced, and no action, and a summary of the unit's wilderness values is included in Appendix III of the Proposed Plan. Three different suitability recommendations were analyzed in the EIS: all wilderness, a partial wilderness recommendation in which approximately 60% of the WSA would be designated as wilderness, and no wilderness.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0	acres recommended for wilderness
43,980	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No Wilderness is the recommendation for the New York Mountains WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The no wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the landforms and ecosystems of this WSA are already well represented in other areas identified for wilderness preservation; (2) large portions of

the area have moderate to high potential for one or more of the following commodities: gold, tungsten, molybdenum, silver, lead, copper and limestone; and (3) the area's special features can be protected without wilderness designation, under existing proposed management plans and guidelines.

The New York Mountains WSA is ecologically similar to other areas identified for wilderness designation. Within 50 air miles are twelve other BLM study areas recommended for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). Many of these twelve areas display the same ecosystem and landforms as this WSA and contain a greater representative sampling of special features than represented in the New York Mountains. The Kingston Mountains WSA (CDCA-222), 45 air miles north and the Granite Mountains WSA (CDCA-256), 30 air miles southwest contain over 80,000 acres of public lands which BLM is recommending as wilderness. The Kingston and Granite Mountains contain many of the special features identified in the New York Mountains including the Rocky Mountain white fir assemblages and the pinon-juniper-oak woodlands. Each of these areas also encompasses a larger amount of acreage with fewer conflicting resource issues making manageability of the Kingston and Granite Mountains a more practical endeavor.

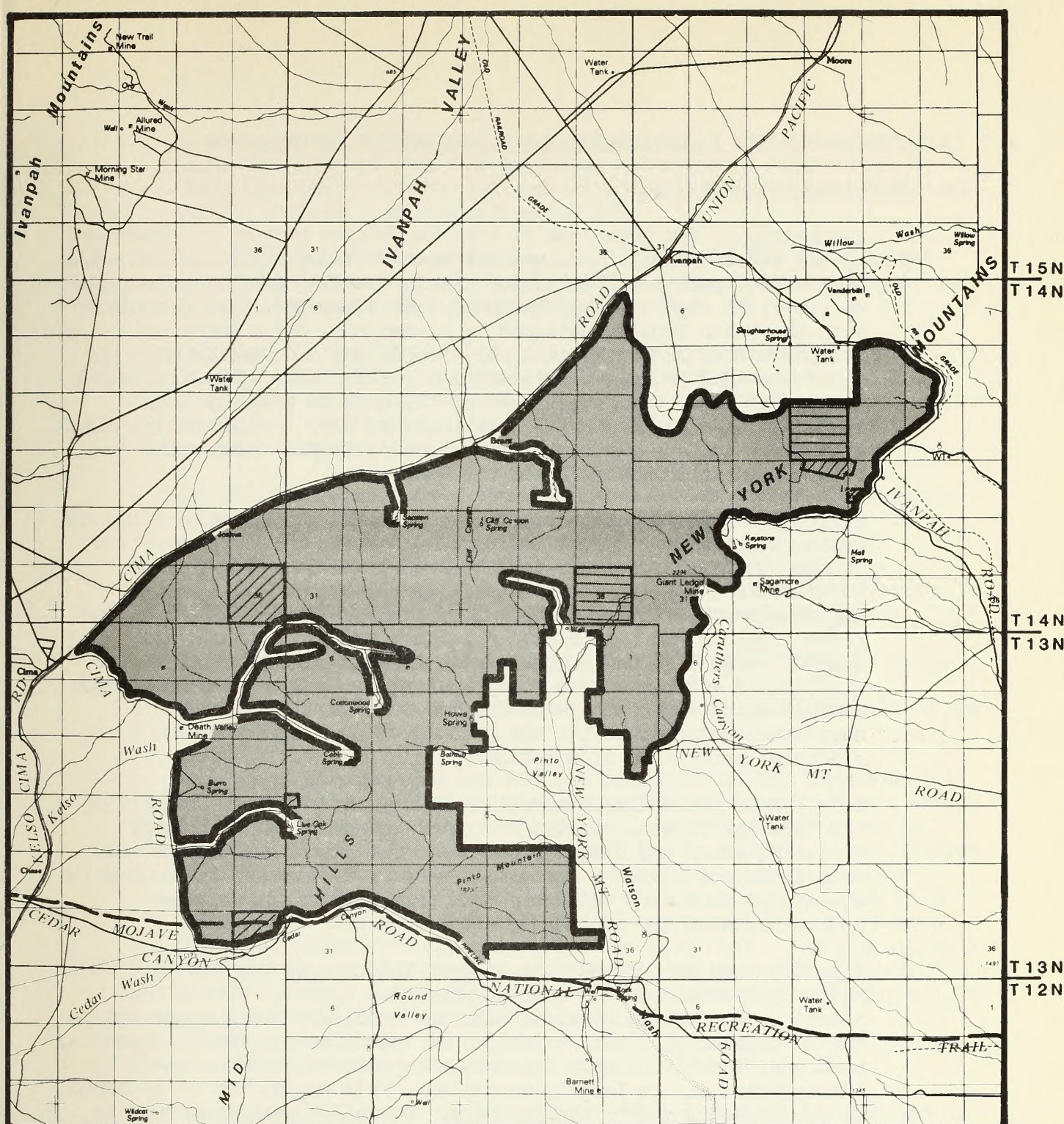
The New York Mountain WSA contains areas of moderate to high potential for a variety of minerals. The study area has a long history of mining and is presently encumbered by 275 mining claims. Some of the 275 mining claims could prove valid. Holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with development, which would make it difficult to protect wilderness values.



The WSA receives approximately 1500 visitor use days annually. The New York Mountains provide good opportunities for hiking, sightseeing, bird watching and nature study and are one of the more frequently used areas in the California Desert for field education and research. Much of the recreation use takes place during hunting season as the WSA harbors one of the better mule deer populations in eastern San Bernardino County. Hunting is also good for dove, quail and chukar. Approximately 65% of this use is exclusively motorized and would therefore be displaced by wilderness designation. There are approximately 30 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. This use is concentrated on the 10 miles of primitive routes which access springs on the western portion of the study area and provide access to the valley surrounding Pinto Mountain located in the south portion of the study area. Motorized recreational use within the Pinto Mountain area is steadily increasing as this portion of the study area is popular for hikers, hunters and horse enthusiasts. The remaining 40% involves nonmotorized uses for primitive recreational activities involving hiking, nature study, field education and research. These uses occur primarily in the central and eastern portion of the New York Mountains. Rough terrain and the lack of access precludes motorized vehicle travel into these portions of the study area.


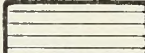

The need to protect the New York Mountains' diverse vegetation and wildlife resources was recognized during the development of the CDCA Plan. The plan incorporated 60% of the lands within the study area into the New York Mountain Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and calls for management of the overall WSA under low intensity guidelines to accomplish this objective. Additional protection is afforded wildlife habitat and vegetation through formal mineral withdrawals totalling 575 acres on lands within Caruthers Canyon, Keystone Spring and Mail Spring. Protection of wilderness and other resource values is further addressed through the implementation of management actions within the EMNSA Plan completed in 1988. These actions include additional proposed mineral withdrawals totaling 3,145 acres, potential closure of additional routes of travel, enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas, and acquisition of most of the private and state lands within the ACEC boundaries.

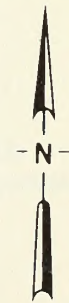
TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	43,980
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		1,295
Private		1,330
Total		46,605
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	43,980
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		43,980

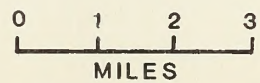


- | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------|
|  | NONE | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS | |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS | |

- | | |
|---|--------------|
|  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | STATE |
|  | PRIVATE |



**New York Mountains
Proposal
MAP-1**



3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The core area of the WSA remains virtually untouched by man and retains its natural integrity. Along the north and south boundaries, permanent facilities within the WSA boundary authorized as pre-FLPMA rights-of-way include water diversion dikes associated with the Union Pacific Railroad, a bladed road and a permanent structure used as a substation by Pacific Bell for maintenance of their existing underground telecommunication line. These permanent structures alter the naturalness of the area as they are highly visible from a major entry points into the WSA. Additionally, mine structures in Live Oak Canyon and Keystone Canyons reduce the naturalness in this portion of the WSA.
2. Solitude: These opportunities are more readily obtainable along the southwestern slopes of the New York Mountains. The high elevation coupled with the rugged granitic outcrops and dense vegetation prevent the intrusions from outside sounds of the Union Pacific Railroad which diminishes these opportunities when standing on the north slope of the mountains. Opportunities for solitude are further reduced as one moves away from the rugged interior due to the lack of vegetation and topographical variation. Depending upon your location within the WSA, outside influences from mining activities adjacent to the WSA boundary may be disruptive to some visitors' perception of solitude.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The core of the New York Mountains possesses high quality primitive values. Within the interior, the rugged granitic outcrops combined with a dense and varied vegetation create a feeling of spaciousness. Again depending upon your location within the WSA, the presence of other users in the interior may go largely unnoticed. This experience is lessened as one moves closer to the boundary. Overall, expansive views in many directions are possible from the interior area as the range rises well above its surrounding topography. The rugged interior covered by complex vegetation patterns and dotted with occasional water sources can accommodate a variety of primitive types of experiences.
4. Special Features: The New York Mountains reflect a blending of Great Basin and Mojave Desert environments and support vegetation and wildlife species representative of each. Individually, each of the plant and wildlife species may be found within nearby areas

recommended for wilderness designation. It is the collective varieties coupled with the densities and acreages represented by these species that make the resources within the New York Mountains worthy of special management attention.

Three Unusual Plant Assemblages occur in the New York Mountains:

- (1) Rocky Mountain white fir; (2) pinyon-juniper-oak woodlands; and
- (3) species restricted to limestone:

(1) Near the top of New York Peak is a small woodland of Rocky Mountain white fir. The community is a Pleistocene relict stand consisting of roughly 30 trees located on a steep slope in the upper reaches of Caruthers Canyon. This area is proposed for formal mineral withdrawal.

(2) The pinon-juniper-oak woodland or interior chaparral community occurs in Caruthers, Keystone, and Live Oak Canyons.

(3) Some of the more uncommon plants restricted to limestone outcrops include cloak and laceferns, Heermann buckwheat, tongue-flower, rock spirea, live-forever, pappus-grass and red grama.

Eriogonum ericifolium var. thornei (Thorne's buckwheat), a State listed endangered species and a candidate for listing as an endangered species by the USFWS occurs in three locations within the study area.

The rugged landscape of the WSA has produced habitat favorable for mule deer and a population of approximately 30 desert bighorn sheep, a BLM sensitive species. Although the topography of the WSA is ideal for these species, their numbers are no doubt severely limited by the small size of the range and scarcity of permanent water sources. The woodland habitats support a relatively diverse bird population. The more significant species include the gray-headed junco, Virginia warbler, and yellow-breasted chat. Raptors are well represented: golden eagles, prairie falcons, American kestrels, Cooper's hawks, sharp-shinned hawks, and Swainson's hawks may all be encountered in the WSA. No Federal or State listed or candidates for listing as rare, threatened or endangered wildlife species are known to occur within the study area.

The Mojave Road traverses the entire EMNSA from east to west and is one mile inside the WSA's southern boundary. The route is one of the premier attractions within this area and has been nominated as a National Recreation Trail.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 43,980 acres of the American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon woodland (*Juniperus-Pinus*) ecosystem.

This ecosystem is represented within the NWPS and in additional areas recommended for wilderness designation including the Providence Mountains WSA (CDCA-263) located ten miles south and the Kingston Mountains WSA (CDCA-222) located 45 miles north of the New York Mountains WSA.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

<u>Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	24	663,131
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	21,485	16	441,880

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers:
The WSA is within a five hour drive of three major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of 12 BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. Seven are within the CDCA, four are within Arizona's Phoenix District and one is in Nevada's Las Vegas District. The closest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 150 miles southwest of the New York Mountains.

C. Manageability

The WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, its particular location within the EMNSA and established recreation use patterns would make wilderness management highly impractical. Manageability for the protection of wilderness values would be further complicated by the following factors: large zones of moderate to high mineral potential coupled with a large number of mining claims and the presence of two rights-of-ways with permanent structures.

The primitive routes within the study area have been used for OHV based recreation for the last 30 years and have been managed by BLM with the specific objective of providing limited OHV access opportunities while protecting sensitive vegetation and wildlife habitat. Off-highway vehicle use occurs primarily along ten miles of primitive routes in the western and southern portions of the study area and along the Mojave Road Recreational Trail. The WSA's tradition of OHV use would create a need for intensive patrol and installation of physical barriers and signs requiring frequent maintenance, should the WSA be designated wilderness. Should the New York Mountains WSA be designated wilderness, the Bureau recommends that a corridor be established which would allow continued OHV recreational use along the Mojave Road subject to the stipulations outlined in the EMNSA Plan.

The area has a long history of mineral exploration, contains areas of moderate to high potential for a variety of minerals and is presently encumbered by 275 mining claims. Although wilderness designation would withdraw the area from claim location, BLM's assessment of the area's mineral potential suggests that some of the existing claims would prove valid. Holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with developments deemed necessary or reasonably incidental to their mining operation, subject only to not causing unnecessary and undue degradation. This provision would do little to protect wilderness values because, even necessary mining developments could significantly alter natural conditions at the site, and potentially disrupt opportunities for solitude over a much greater area.

Two pre-FLPMA rights-of-way held by Union Pacific Railroad and Pacific Bell Telephone Company contain permanent facilities which require routine maintenance. The permanent facilities associated with these

rights-of-way include water diversions dikes, a bladed road and a permanent structure used as a telecommunications substation. These facilities and the maintenance required will continue to detract from the area's naturalness and should be excluded from the area should it be designated as wilderness.

Portions of two grazing allotments cover the entire New York Mountain WSA. Each allotment contains several grandfathered range improvements consisting of wells, storage tanks and corrals which require vehicle access to perform routine maintenance.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: At the time of the recommendation process for the WSA, BLM Geology-Energy-Mineral assessment for the New York Mountains G-E-M Resource Area (GRA) indicated that the WSA is favorable for precious and base metal deposits, although the G-E-M report did not identify specific areas of potential mineral occurrence. The Desert Plan includes most of the New York Mountains in the class of unqualified potential. That is, the locatable mineral resources are interpreted on the basis of preliminary evaluation of geologic mineral occurrence and limited field verification data.

From the unqualified information available for the 1980 GRA assessment, metallic mineral resources include rare earth elements, iron, antimony, gold, silver, copper, lead tungsten, and molybdenum. Non metallic mineral resources include limestone, dolomite, fluorite and perlite.

All of the patented mining areas were excluded from the WSA boundary. These areas are located in some of the more frequently visited areas of the New York Mountains proper and include the lower reaches of Live Oak and Sagamore Canyon(s) in the heart of the New York Mountains proper. Other active mining operations near Slaughterhouse and Keystone Spring(s) were also excluded from the boundaries of the WSA because of the known potential for minerals and extensive level of workings present at these sites. Studies show that the mineralized areas associated with these mines extend within the boundaries of the WSA.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Decision: Neither the U.S. Geological Survey nor the U.S. Bureau of Mines conducted mineral surveys because the WSA is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. Mineral Land Classification Report (OFR-85-8-IA) completed by the California

Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) evaluated the presence and occurrence of specific metallic and industrial mineral deposits. These reports provided new and more detailed mineral resource potential data for the WSA than was recognized in the BLM G-E-M assessment completed during the recommendation process. The WSA contains at least ten past producers of a variety of metals, notably tungsten, molybdenite, copper, lead, gold, silver and zinc. The CDMG reported a moderate potential for gold and silver occurring in Mesozoic granitic rock in the western portion of the WSA surrounding the Death Valley mine. A moderate potential for molybdenum and associated gold, silver, copper and lead, also in granitic rock, is mapped in the south central portion of the WSA north of Pinto Valley. Between these two areas is a small locale with high potential for gold, silver, copper and limestone surrounding the Schiedel Mine. A large part of the northeast area is reported as having a moderate potential for copper, lead, silver, and tungsten as shown on the attached map. The northeast corner of this same area is classified high potential for copper, zinc, lead and silver.

High limestone potential exists in limestone outcrops as a long ridge extending south from the Giant Ledge Mine and forms the entire east skyline of Caruthers Canyon. Two mines immediately outside of the east boundary developed a series of quartz veins enclosed in limestone containing copper, lead and minor precious metals. It's estimated that several million dollars of limestone reserves and several billion dollars of molybdenite resources are present in the area. Other significant mines excluded from the WSA include Giant Ledge and Sagamore, both of which were tungsten producers. Base and precious metals mines within the WSA boundaries include the Cooper Queen, Live Oak, Garvanza and Dorn tungsten Mines. A small sericite mine occurs in the vicinity of Keystone Spring immediately outside of the WSA boundary (See Map 2).

As of December, 1987, 275 unpatented mining claims were on file with the BLM. No development work has been authorized and no active mining is currently taking place, although several plans of operation were applied for and denied during the interim stages of wilderness management.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	252	252	N/A	5,040	5,040
Placer	N/A	22	22	N/A	880	880
Mill Site	N/A	1	1	N/A	5	5
Total	N/A	275	275	N/A	5,925	5,925

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: There will be a moderate adverse impact on wilderness values within the lower elevations comprising 30% of the WSA as a result of noise and surface disturbance associated with recreation use and mineral exploration and development. These values will be negligibly impacted within the remaining 70% encompassing the interior areas as a result of lack of vehicle access and the screening of steep rugged terrain.
2. Impact on Thorne's Buckwheat Habitat: There would be a minor adverse impact as a result of potential road construction associated with mineral exploration and development and from OHV use. This impact is site specific and restricted to the plant's location within Cliff Canyon as the route to Fourth of July Canyon is administratively closed to motorized recreational vehicle use. The impact could be significant if any mining plans of operation are authorized.
3. Impact on Unusual Plant Assemblages: There would be a minor adverse impact to the UPAs associated with limestone outcrops and the pinyon-juniper-oak woodland habitats as a result of motorized access associated with recreation use and mineral exploration and development. The Rocky Mountain white fir UPA would not be impacted from OHV use because of the lack of motorized vehicle access and its location within the steep rugged terrain of the WSA. This UPA is currently proposed for withdrawal from mineral entry.
4. Impact on Desert Bighorn Sheep and Mule Deer Habitat: A negligible adverse impact would occur within 70% of the WSA (interior area) as a result of noise and surface disturbance associated with recreation use and mineral exploration and development. This disturbance is likely to be minimal as a result of screening from steep terrain. A minor negative impact would occur on habitat within the remainder of the WSA as a result of increased motorized vehicle use and less restrictive terrain.
5. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available. Mining activities would be subject to regulations set forth in 43 CFR 3809 and further managed under the restrictions outlined in the CDCA and EMNSA Plans.
6. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use: Motorized recreation use would continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the EMNSA Plan. Such use is confined primarily to canyon floors and primitive routes adjacent to Pinto Mountain and the western portion of the study area. Motorized recreation use on the Mojave Road would continue and be managed by guidelines established in the EMNSA plan.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Because this topic was not explored in the EIS, no further discussion will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Many comments were received. These generally supported inclusion of the area for wilderness study. Some comments pointed out the presence of mining activity and roads to springs.
2. Study Phase: Thirty six comments were received. Nineteen favored and fifteen opposed wilderness designation; two were noncommittal. The most frequently mentioned feature noted by wilderness proponents was the area's outstanding vegetation, including four grasses on the California Native Plant Society's rare and endangered list, coastal biota (oaks and ceanothus), good ranges of grasslands, forests of Juniper-pinyon, Joshua trees, white fir and cactus gardens. The overlap of Great Basin, Sonoran, and Mojave Desert vegetation types makes it good for research on ecology, natural history, and biology. A variety of wildlife are present, including desert bighorn, deer, and many birds. Golden eagle and prairie falcons nest in Castle Peaks.

Respondents stated that the area provides fine recreational opportunities. Hiking, rockclimbing, hunting, and nature study are popular. Deer, dove, quail, and chukar are available for hunting. The rugged topography provides unusual possibilities for solitude as well as excellent scenic quality. One writer felt that grazing was compatible with wilderness in this location, while others pointed out that remnants of early mining, such as those of the 1891-1893 Vanderbilt boom, were of archaeological value rather than detracting from wilderness quality. One requested that WSAs 262, 263, 264, and 265 be combined into one large wilderness area.

High mineralization was the major reason for opposing wilderness designation for this WSA. The New York Mountains have the best mineral potential in northeastern San Bernardino County, all of which is accessible by four-wheel drive.

Minerals present include lead, gold, silver, molybdenum, zinc, tungsten, fluorite, copper, and limestone. Vehicle access to the mines and claims was urged. Access was also wanted for hunting and for maintenance of communication facilities.

Features which were seen to be intrusions disturbing to wilderness quality were roads to mines and springs, private land, a microwave relay station (already excluded), water tanks and mines.

Several comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). The mineral potential of the area was mentioned and exclusion of the Dolly Varden Mine was requested. Several boundary changes were requested. One favored wilderness because of the botanical uniqueness (288 species) of the area.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: Few comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. This WSA was opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a group of mining, rockhounding, and OHV organizations. This group recommended a classification of limited use which was in agreement with the No-Wilderness (No Action) alternative. A large number of club members sent in letters and printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation-oriented groups, such as the Wilderness Society and Sierra Club, supported the Protection Alternative which proposed all Wilderness for this unit.
4. Proposed Plan: Wilderness proponents were strongly opposed to the recommendation of the Proposed Plan of limited use for this area, particularly since both the Balanced and Protection Alternatives had recommended wilderness. A major campaign was conducted by the Wilderness Society, Sierra Club and Audobon Society along with other conservation organizations to get this unit into the wilderness system. The New York Mountains were described as the scenic backbone of the entire eastern Mojave Desert. They offer opportunities for all varieties of wilderness recreation. Miners wrote and requested access to their claims.

No comments were received from local governments.

5. Later comments: In 1982, an amendment to the California Desert Plan was proposed by the Sierra Club and the Desert Protective Council to change WSA 265 from nonsuitable for wilderness to suitable. The amendment was not considered because no new information had been presented. In 1983, an amendment was again proposed by the Sierra Club to change this WSA to suitable. It was again not considered because of a lack of new data and because of the area's high mineralization.

Castle Peaks

CDCA 266

CASTLE PEAKS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-266)

1. THE STUDY AREA —

48,180 acres

The Castle Peaks Wilderness Study Area is located in eastern San Bernardino County, on the eastern edge of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest cities are Needles, California, 70 miles southeast; and Las Vegas, Nevada, 90 miles north. The WSA contains 46,053 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 640 acres of State land, 197 acres of private land and 1,290 acres of split estate, in which the surface is Federal but the sub-surface is private (see Map 1 and Table 1).

Beginning at the northern tip of the WSA, the boundary follows the California-Nevada state line south for about eight and three-quarter miles. Leaving the state line, the WSA boundary follows a primitive way to the former Barnwell to Searchlight railroad grade. The WSA boundary then follows the railroad grade for about five miles, crosses the road to Dove Springs, and returns to the railroad grade, following it an additional four and one-half miles to the abandoned townsite of Barnwell. The boundary follows an old railroad grade from Barnwell to the site of Vanderbilt, then follows Willow Wash to the Union Pacific Railroad line. The WSA boundary then follows the railroad north toward Nipton, excluding a series of diversion dikes that protect the tracks from flash floods. Two miles south of Nipton, the WSA boundary leaves the railroad, following a powerline maintenance road four and three-quarter miles northeast to again meet the California-Nevada state line.

The study area contains a variety of landforms. Sprawling bajadas and the broad expanses of Ivanpah Valley to the northwest, and Lanfair Valley to the southeast, radiate from the central mountainous area. The mountains are dominated by the butte-like spires of the Castle Peaks, reaching to nearly 6,000 feet in elevation. Throughout the central mountainous region of the WSA are numerous meandering canyons. Dense stands of Joshua trees and yuccas on the lower slopes provide interesting color and texture to the landscape.

Several other designations overlies all, or portions of, the Castle Peaks WSA. The study area is within the northeast corner of the 1.2 million acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA). A portion of the Castle Peaks WSA is within the New York Mountain Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), designated to protect outstanding natural and cultural values. The WSA also includes a Natural Environment Area and an Outstanding Natural Area.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for the CDCA Plan; protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE — 44,252 acres recommended for wilderness
3,824 BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

Ninety-two percent suitable partial wilderness is the recommendation for the Castle Peaks WSA. The 3,824 acres in this WSA recommended nonsuitable are released for uses other than wilderness. In addition to the Federal acreage recommended for wilderness, BLM recommends that 93 acres of private land, 640 acres of State land and 1,290 acres of split estate be acquired through exchange or purchase and designated as wilderness. With acquisition of these inholdings, a total of 44,252 acres are recommended for wilderness. Appendix 1 lists all inholdings and provides additional information on their acquisition. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The partial wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the area recommended for designation exemplifies wilderness as defined by the Wilderness Act; (2) the recommended wilderness will protect important wildlife habitat and superb scenic vistas; (3) the partial wilderness will result in minimal displacement of established motorized recreation use; and (4) the recommended nonwilderness is valuable for cattle grazing.

The lands recommended for wilderness possess an outstanding primitive character exemplifying the qualities described in the definition of wilderness contained in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964. Within this remote region of the Mojave Desert, the "earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man," and "man himself is a visitor who does not remain." The primitive condition of the peaks, the flanking bajada to the north, and the rolling hills to the south adds to the feeling of solitude by forming an extensive area in which the works of man go largely unnoticed. The feeling is further enhanced by the outstanding views of adjacent areas that the range offers, particularly of the Castle Mountains area to the south. Educational field study, hiking, backpacking, and other unconfined types of recreation are limited only by the interest and stamina of the visitor.

The Castle Peaks WSA encompasses a region of outstanding scenic and ecological values. Forming the center core of the WSA are the Castle Peaks, a series of prominent reddish spires that can be seen 50 miles away and serve as a landmark of high aesthetic value. The area's diverse vegetation and numerous springs and seeps provide excellent habitat for desert

wildlife, including bighorn sheep, mule deer, and desert tortoise. The WSA contains some of the best desert tortoise habitat in the eastern Mojave Desert. There are approximately fifty miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use.

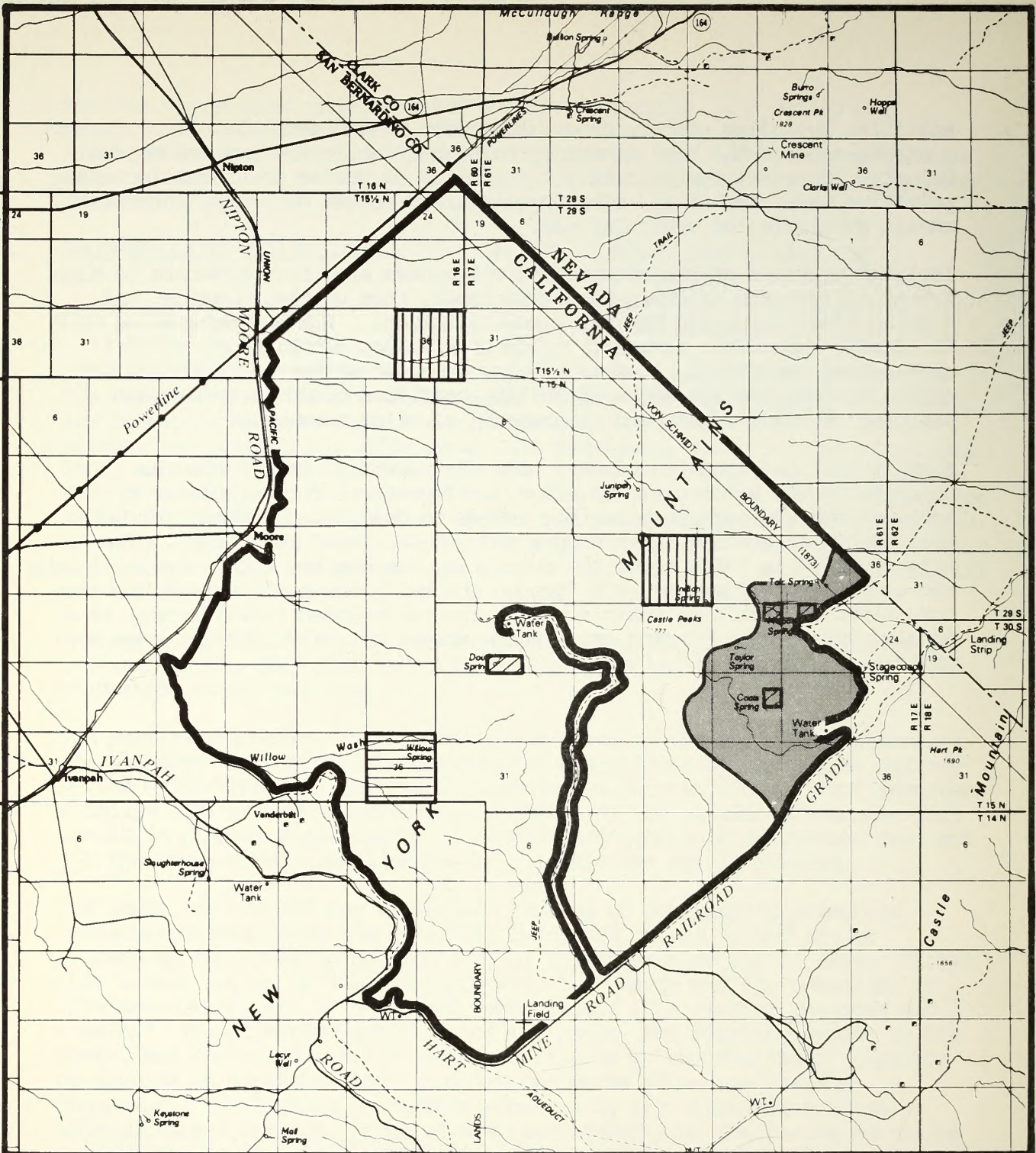
Isolated portions of the recommended wilderness area have moderate to high potential for gold, silver, lead, fluorspar, rare earths, uranium, and thorium (See Energy and Mineral Resource Values). BIM has determined that the Castle Peak WSA's exemplary wilderness values outweigh its mineral development potential. However, the recommended wilderness contains 133 mining claims, and future manageability conflicts could occur between exercise of valid rights and maintenance of wilderness values.

A small portion along the eastern edge of the WSA is recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness, to allow development of future grazing improvements and continued vehicle access on designated routes, for both maintenance of grazing improvements and vehicle-based recreation. The majority of this WSA's motorized recreation use has been concentrated in the recommended nonwilderness, even though the recommended wilderness contains more miles of primitive vehicle ways. The recommended nonwilderness is a popular upland game hunting area, where access has traditionally been by vehicle.

T 16 N
T 15
1/2 N

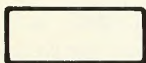
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R 16 E R 17 E

R 17 E R 18 E



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS



SPLIT ESTATE

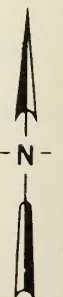
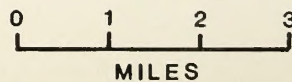


STATE



PRIVATE

**Castle Peaks
Proposal
MAP-1**



CDCA-266
JUNE, 1988

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	46,053
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	1,290
Inholdings		
State		640
Private		197
Total		<u>48,180</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	42,229
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA) ¹	1,290
Split Estate	(outside WSA) ¹	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>43,519</u>
Inholdings ¹		
State		640
Private		93
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	3,824
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>3,824</u>

¹ Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The recommended wilderness portion of the Castle Peaks WSA contains only isolated and infrequent signs of man's presence. There are a few stock watering facilities in the southern portion of this area, consisting of troughs and unobtrusive tanks. Some small scale mining prospects, posts and monuments associated with mining claim location, and occasional traces of vehicle use on ways or in washes are all substantially unnoticeable within the WSA.

Although the recommended nonwilderness contains less total mileage of primitive ways, its smaller acreage results in it having a greater concentration of primitive vehicle ways than does the recommended wilderness. Numerous range improvements associated with Taylor, Coats, and Malpais Springs also exist in this area.

2. Solitude: Rugged mountains, meandering canyons and broad valleys provide visual screening and open space. These qualities generally provide excellent opportunities for isolation and solitude throughout the WSA.

Within a small area along the western boundary of the recommended wilderness, solitude is reduced by sights and sounds of operations at the Vanderbilt Mine, located one-half mile from the WSA boundary.

The recommended nonwilderness area receives the bulk of this WSA's recreation use, which slightly reduces opportunities for solitude when compared to the rest of the area. The higher concentration of visitors here increases the probability of encountering other people or signs of their presence.

This WSA is periodically overflown by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Unique geologic formations, diverse natural features, and high scenic quality provide excellent opportunities for day-hiking, backpacking, nature study, photography, and camping.
4. Special Features: There are two unusual plant assemblages (UPAs) within the WSA: the Lanfair Valley Desert Grassland, and "Vegetation Associated with Seeps and Springs." This second UPA is classified as highly sensitive due to its rarity in the California Desert and its importance to the survival of desert wildlife. This UPA is found at various locations within the Castle Peaks WSA.

Ivanpah Valley provides some of the best desert tortoise habitat in the eastern Mojave Desert. Moderate population densities of 50 to 100 per square mile are found over an area of approximately twelve square miles. The desert tortoise is a BLM sensitive species in California and is also under status review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for possible listing as a threatened or endangered species.

The California Department of Fish and Game estimates this WSA includes 100% of the concentration area (three square miles), 100% of the permanent range (five square miles), and 80% of the seasonal range (16 square miles) for a herd of about 25 desert bighorn sheep, a California BLM sensitive species.

Wild and free-roaming burros are found within the WSA, which is within the California Desert District East Mojave Herd Management Area. An overpopulation of burros within the WSA has produced impacts in the form of excessive overuse of perennial forage plants and competition with deer and bighorn sheep for available water. The East Mojave Herd Management Plan calls for the removal of all burros within the WSA.

Approximately seven square miles of the WSA is considered highly sensitive/significant for cultural resources. Four archaeological sites have been recorded in this WSA. These sites are located in the higher elevations of the WSA and indicate that prehistoric Native American populations utilized the plant and water resources here. The New York Mountains, or "Avi Wacca" in Mohave, stretch across the central region of the WSA and are recognized as an area of both sacred and mythological significance. Traditional hunting by both Mohave and Chemehuevi is noted to have taken place in this area.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The Castle Peaks WSA contains 46,053 acres of the American Desert/Creosote bush (*Larrea*) ecosystem. The area is in the transitional zone between the cooler Great Basin desert to the north, and the warmer Sonoran desert to the south, resulting in an unusual diversity of plant and animal species.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

<u>Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,221,960
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,608,156

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of three major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of wilderness areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of these population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The nearest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, approximately 200 miles southwest of Castle Peaks WSA. Eleven BLM study areas recommended for wilderness are within 50 air miles: one in Nevada's Las Vegas District, three in Arizona's Phoenix District, and seven in the California Desert Conservation Area, California Desert District. The closest of these, Fort Piute WSA (CDCA-267), is approximately five miles southeast.

C. Manageability

The Castle Peaks WSA is manageable as wilderness. The recommended wilderness is more readily manageable than the seven percent of the WSA recommended for nonwilderness, from the standpoint that little existing visitor use would be displaced by designation. However, the entire northeast boundary of the study area is unrecognizable by any landmark or physical feature, and will require extensive signing to identify it to the public.

The northeast boundary of the WSA is the California-Nevada border, which is an imaginary line not recognizable on the ground. OHV recreationists can unknowingly cross into the WSA, as there are presently no signs or other markers to delineate the boundary. Although the recommended wilderness area contains a network of primitive ways, motorized use there has been light.

The portion of the WSA recommended for nonwilderness has a long history of motorized recreation use, primarily for deer and upland game hunting, some of which originates in California and some in Nevada. This area contains 15 miles of primitive ways, plus numerous washes which serve as ways. Managing this area as wilderness would require proportionately more effort in signing and patrol as compared to the rest of the WSA.

Manageability of the recommended wilderness area would be greatly enhanced through acquisition of the valid existing rights, which would ensure that wilderness values could be permanently protected and maintained at their existing level. Isolated portions of the recommended wilderness area have moderate to high potential for gold, silver, lead, fluorspar, rare earths, uranium, and thorium (see Energy and Mineral Resource Values). The recommended wilderness contains 133 mining claims, concentrated in the zones of highest mineral potential. It is likely that some of these claims would withstand a validity examination, making their development possible. To assure the long-term protection of existing high quality wilderness values, it may be necessary to acquire the valid mineral rights. Otherwise, naturalness and opportunities for solitude will suffer if future mineral development occurs.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Castle Peaks WSA is located in the BLM New York Mountains Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The mineral resource data for this WSA had not been fully analyzed, integrated, and interpreted at the time the wilderness recommendation was made. However, the EIS for the CDCA Plan stated

that the WSA has a potential for the occurrence of metals, including copper and lead, along with uranium and thorium. No mining claims were known to be recorded as of December 12, 1979 in the WSA.

The 1980 BLM GRA file data identifies occurrences of fluorspar in the extreme northern corner; gold, silver, copper, lead and rare earth minerals in the west-central portion; and gold, silver, copper and lead along the southwestern boundary of the WSA. All these areas are within the BLM recommended suitable portion of the WSA. The file data indicated that the metamorphic and volcanic rocks covering the southern two-thirds of the WSA, both suitable and non-suitable, were classified as favorable for metals; the rest of the WSA was not classified due to insufficient data.

The volcanic rocks of the WSA were classified as favorable for the occurrence of uranium and thorium; the remainder of the WSA was classified as an intermediate area. There was insufficient data to classify the WSA for non-metallics, saline or saleable minerals. In January, 1979, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) classified a small area along the northwestern boundary of the BLM recommended wilderness portion of the WSA as prospectively valuable for oil and gas.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Decision: Between 1982 and 1985, the U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) and the USGS conducted mineral surveys of the portion of the WSA recommended suitable for wilderness designation. The results of both surveys were published in 1986 in USGS Bulletin 1713-A. The Bulletin stated that the WSA is adjacent to three mining districts with intermittent production: the Crescent Peak District to the northeast, the Hart District to the southeast, and the Vanderbilt District immediately adjacent to the southwestern boundary of the WSA.

The Albermarle Mine in the northern portion of the WSA was reported to have produced 112 tons of ore between 1942 and 1948 which yielded 950 ounces of silver, 7,671 pounds of lead, seven ounces of gold and 650 pounds of copper. The immediate area surrounding the mine was classified as having a moderate potential for the occurrence of vein-type silver-lead resources. A larger area surrounding the mine was classified as having a moderate potential for fluorspar due to the occurrence of fluorspar veins in the area. The Bulletin stated that several tons of fluorspar were produced from a site 250 feet north of the WSA in 1925.

The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG), in an earlier 1985 mineral survey report, showed some conflicting mineral classification evidence which BLM has adopted for this summary. Map 2 identifies another moderate potential area for gold and silver resources in the southwestern portion of the WSA. In Joseph, (1985, Mineral Land Classification of the Ivanpah-Crescent

Peak-Searchlight 15' Quadrangles, San Bernardino County, California, CDMG, Open File Report 85-7 IA), the USGS moderate potential area for gold in the northern region of the WSA was expanded to encompass the area classified by USGS as moderate potential for fluorspar. In the west-central portion of the WSA, the CDMG report classified one of the areas identified as a low potential by USGS as a moderate potential for gold and silver mineralization. However, the CDMG report did not support the USGS moderate potential for gold and silver in the southwest portion of the WSA.

Based upon the fact that the BOM 1984 Mineral Land Assessment (MLA) 9-84 reported occurrences of gold, silver, lead, fluorspar, uranium, and rare earth elements in the WSA, the areas classified by USGS as a low potential for these minerals was increased to moderate potential. Where known production has occurred, the USGS classification was increased to high potential.

The area classified as potentially valuable for oil and gas by the USGS in 1979 is considered to have a moderate potential for the occurrence of oil and gas using the BLM classification scheme.

Unpatented placer mining claims are concentrated in the northern and western portions of the recommended suitable area of the WSA. Unpatented lode mining claims are located in the western, eastern, and northern portions of the WSA. The significant increase in the number of mining claims in the northern and southwestern portions of the WSA combined with the proposed open pit gold mine in the 1987 plan of operation submitted for the Vanderbilt Mine, demonstrates renewed interest mineral exploration and development of this WSA. The following table summarizes active unpatented mining claims recorded with BLM as of December 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	100	22	122	2,000	440	2,440
Placer	33	0	33	1,320	0	1,320
Mill Site	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	133	22	155	3,320	440	3,760



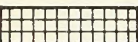
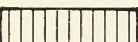
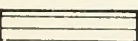
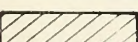
T 16 N
T 15
1/2 N

T 15
1/2 N
T 15 N



T 15 N
T 14 N

R 16 E | R 17 E

R 17 E | R 18 E

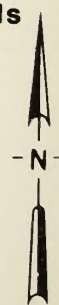
-  Recommended for Wilderness
-  Recommended for Non Wilderness
-  Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
-  Split Estate
-  State
-  Private

Explanation

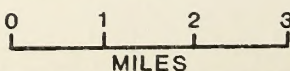
-  High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
-  Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

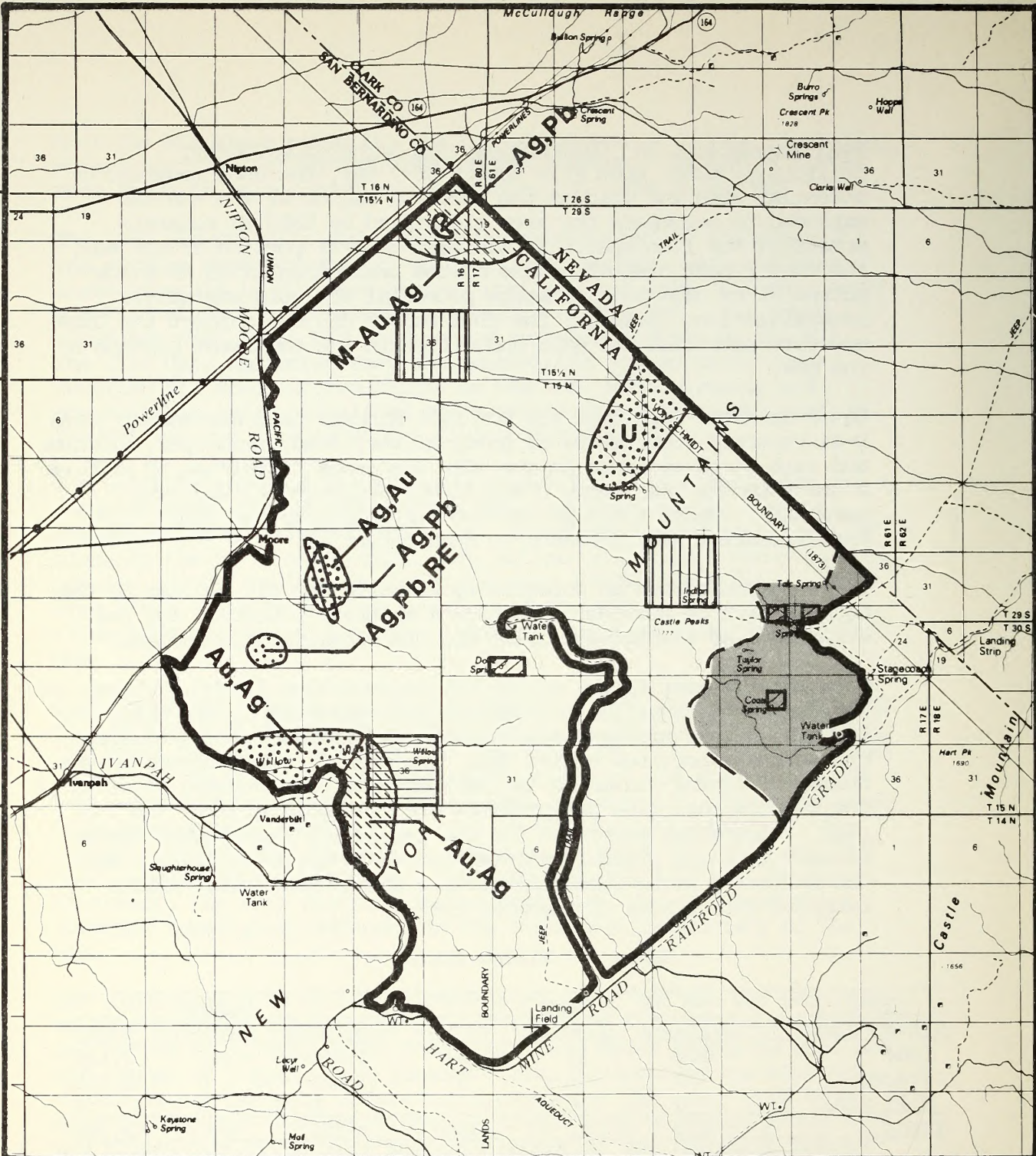
- Ag** Silver
- Au** Gold
- Pb** Lead
- RE** Rare Earth
- U** Uranium



Castle Peaks Mineral Resource Potential



MAP-2
CDCA-266



E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: For the 92% of the WSA to be designated wilderness, management will focus on maintaining the area's high quality wilderness values by excluding uses that are incompatible with wilderness management. However, values may be lost in areas of moderate to high mineral potential through development of valid existing claims. On the seven percent of the WSA to remain nonwilderness, mineral exploration and development and OHV recreation will cause a gradual decline in wilderness values.
2. Impact on Motorized Recreation: Approximately 50 miles of vehicle routes are within the recommended wilderness area and will be closed to motorized use. Five miles of routes within the nonwilderness portion of the WSA will remain approved for motor vehicle use.
3. Impact on Mineral Exploration and Development: Ninety-three percent of the WSA will be withdrawn from mineral entry, precluding further exploration. Development of 133 mining claims in the recommended wilderness area will be subject to proof of a valid discovery. Seven percent of the WSA, containing 22 claims, will be unaffected by the proposed action.
4. Impact on Livestock Grazing: Existing grazing use can continue throughout the area. Future improvements to increase forage allocation in the nonwilderness portion can be undertaken, consistent with CDCA Plan guidelines.
5. Impact on Archeological Resources: All proposed surface-disturbing activities will be subjected to environmental analysis to allow detection and salvage of any resources.
6. Impact on Native American Uses and Values: Traditional hunting and gathering activities can continue, though access will be restricted to non-motorized means of transportation within the area to be designated wilderness. Sites with religious significance will be protected under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Any changes in physical appearance or use of sacred sites will be made after consultation with the appropriate Native American group.
7. Impact on Unusual Plant Assemblages: Portions of both UPAs are within the recommended wilderness, where they will be protected from surface disturbance to the maximum extent possible. The portions of the UPAs within the recommended nonwilderness will continue to be managed in accordance with the CDCA Plan. Environmental analyses requiring special consideration of UPAs will be performed on all significant proposals. Adverse impacts will be avoided or minimized, and rehabilitative measures undertaken where impacts are unavoidable.

8. Impact on Bighorn Sheep and Desert Tortoise: Most of the bighorn sheep and desert tortoise habitats are within the recommended wilderness, where the habitat will be preserved in its natural state to the maximum extent possible. Within the seven percent of the WSA to remain nonwilderness, future planned actions will be subject to environmental analysis to identify any potential impacts to desert tortoise or bighorn sheep, allowing development and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.
9. Impact on Management of Wild Burros: Management techniques will require modification as a result of restrictions on the use of mechanized equipment. However, there will be no impact on ability to remove burros.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Known inaccuracies are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: The majority of comments that addressed inventory considerations were in support of the findings. A few others disagreed.
2. Study Phase: Of the twelve comments received on this WSA, seven favored wilderness designation. Outstanding resources which were listed as contributing to wilderness quality of which were in need of wilderness protection were the following: valuable botanical resources, including two rare plants (unnamed), bighorn sheep and deer habitats, raptor nesting sites, a Joshua tree ecosystem threatened by overgrazing, a highly unique overlap of Colorado, Mojave, and Sonoran type vegetation, fir forests (there are no fir forests in the Castle Peaks WSA), and coastal chaparral. One respondent suggested a contiguous New York Mountain-Providence Mountain wilderness unit.

Respondents opposing wilderness status mentioned the mineral potential of the area and the factors which they felt detract from its wilderness suitability. The area was said to have potential for saline minerals, especially borates, and gold, silver, copper, and molybdenum. Wilderness quality was degraded by transmission lines, with a zone of influence of up to two and a half miles on each side, grazing facilities, and existing mines in the southeast portion.

Several comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). Generally, the comments noted the considerable mineral potential, the need for access routes, and the unique botanical and fragile environment of the area.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: Few comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Desert Plan Alternatives. The National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups, recommended this area for medium multiple use, Class "M." A large number of club members sent in printed coupons or letters supporting this position. Conservation-oriented organizations approved the Protection Alternative which recommended this WSA for wilderness status. Thus, they requested that the entire WSA be designated wilderness.
4. Proposed Plan: General input was similar to that for the Draft Plan. The Citizens for Mojave National Park requested that the entire WSA be included as wilderness.

No comments were received from local governments.

APPENDIX 1
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION
CASTLE PEAKS WSA (CDCA-266)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				TOTAL ACREAGE	NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	
	TWNSHP	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN			SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)
1	15N.	16E.	36	SBM	640	1	STATE	STATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
2	15N.	17E.	19	SBM	80	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	PURCHASE	8.0	2.5

These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.

Fort Piute

CDCA 267

FORT PIUTE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-267)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

48,326 acres

The Fort Piute WSA is located in San Bernardino County, at the eastern edge of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA is approximately 30 miles northwest of Needles, California, and 90 miles southwest of Las Vegas, Nevada. The study area contains 46,086 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 637 acres of State land and private ownership totalling 1,603 acres (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The north WSA boundary is the California/Nevada state line. A powerline and its accompanying maintenance road form the east boundary, excluding the road into Fort Piute and a short spur road south of the Fort Piute road. The south boundary is an underground telephone cable maintenance road. The west boundary follows a combination of roads and topographic features. Starting at the southwest corner, it follows the base of the Piute Range north approximately eight miles. Skirting a section of private property, the boundary swings further west, proceeding cross-country for two miles to meet a road maintained by the OX Cattle Ranch. Following this road for about three and one-half miles, the west WSA boundary then cherrystems a four-wheel drive route leading from the Lanfair Valley into the heart of the Piute Range. After leaving this primitive way, the WSA boundary proceeds cross-country again through the Castle Mountains, excluding areas where previous mining activity is evident. At Hart Peak, the boundary follows the edge of the mountains west and then north to meet an improved road that extends from Barnwell, California, to Searchlight, Nevada. The WSA boundary follows this road to the state line.

The WSA is readily accessible by two-wheel drive vehicle, via the roads that form its east and south boundaries, and the portion of the northern tip that adjoins the Barnwell-Searchlight road. Washes and primitive ways provide off-highway vehicle access into the interior of the WSA from several locations. Framed by the lush Lanfair Valley on the west and the rolling expanse of Piute Valley on the east, the Fort Piute WSA is a land of contrast, ranging from the steep and rugged Castle Mountains along its northwest edge to the mesa-like Piute Range in the south. Elevations within the WSA range from 5,543 feet at the summit of Hart Peak to 2,400 feet in Piute Valley along the eastern border of the WSA. Vegetation is predominantly creosote bush scrub, dominated by creosote bush, Larrea tridentata. Riparian woodland dominated by Fremont cottonwood (Populus fremanti) and Goodding's willow (Salix gooddingii) is found along Piute Creek.

Several special designations overlies portions of the Fort Piute WSA. The study area is entirely within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area. At its southern tip, the WSA encompasses all but about 200 acres of the 4,175-acre Fort Piute Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Approximately 600 acres of the ACEC have been withdrawn from mineral and agricultural entry to protect riparian habitat and cultural resources.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE — 36,443 acres recommended for
wilderness
11,232 BLM acres recommended for
nonwilderness

Seventy-five percent partial wilderness is the recommendation for the Fort Piute WSA. The 11,232 acres in this WSA recommended nonsuitable are released for uses other than wilderness. In addition to the Federal acreage recommended for wilderness, BLM recommends that 1589 acres of private land be acquired through exchange or purchase and designated as wilderness. With acquisition of these inholdings, a total of 36,443 acres are recommended for wilderness. Appendix 1 lists all inholdings and provides additional information on their acquisition. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

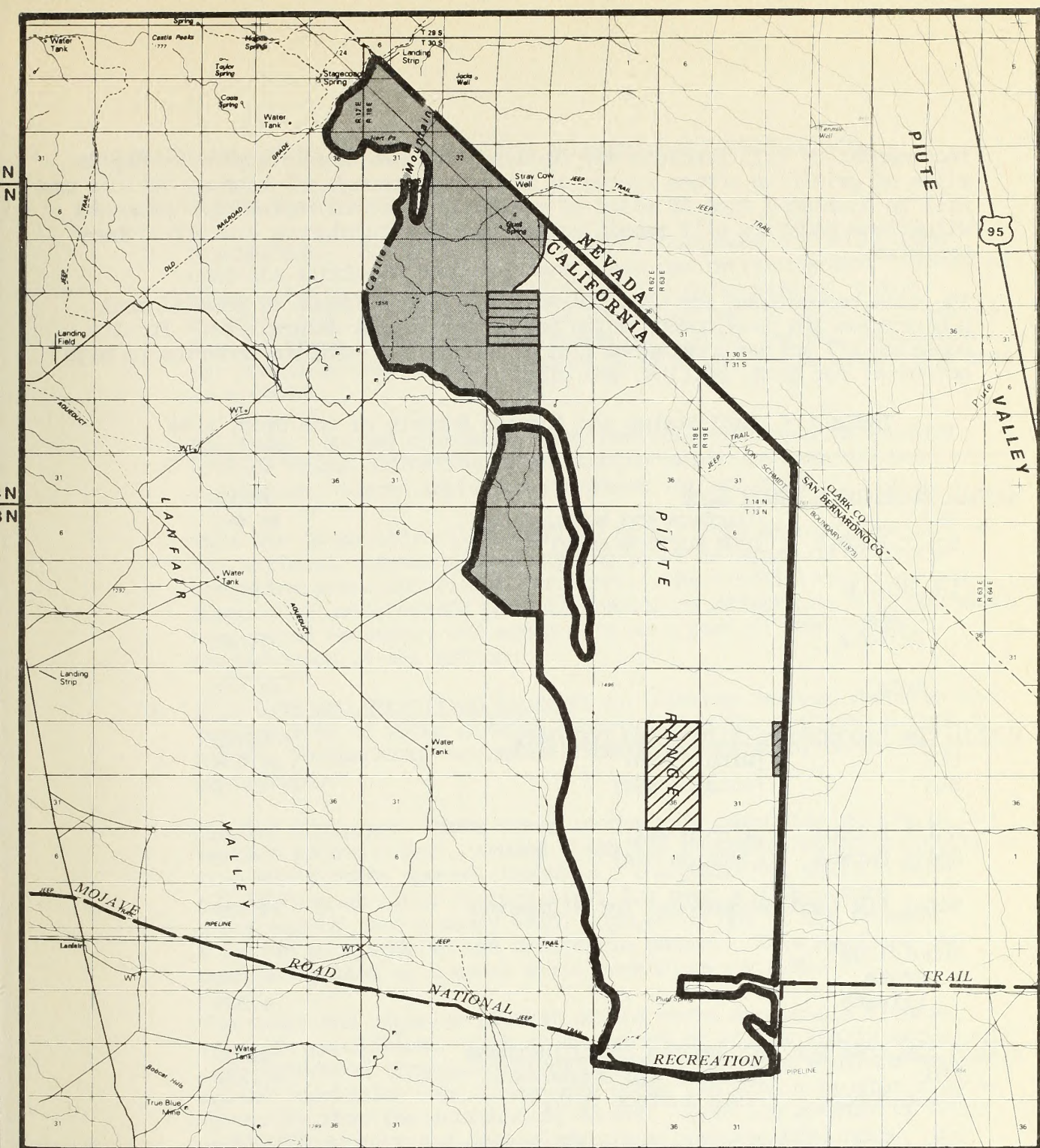
The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The partial wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale:

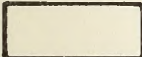


(1) the area recommended for wilderness designation possesses outstanding wilderness values, as well as a unique collection of ecological, geological, and historic/cultural resource values; (2) the area recommended for wilderness designation has limited potential for other uses that would conflict with wilderness management; and (3) the area recommended for nonwilderness has lower quality wilderness values and higher mineral potential.


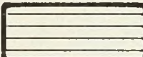

The proposed wilderness area exemplifies the definition of wilderness set forth in the Wilderness Act. Here, the "earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man," and "man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Opportunities for hiking, backpacking, exploring, and other primitive forms of recreation are limited only by the stamina of the visitor. Low visitation and the screening effects of rugged topography ensure ample opportunities for solitude. Good to excellent scenic quality occurs throughout the area, especially in the southern end of the Piute Range in Piute Canyon. Tucked deep within the canyon is Piute Creek, the only perennial stream in the eastern Mojave Desert, and focal point for a wealth of biological and cultural resources.

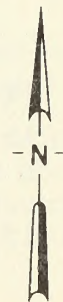
Although the proposed wilderness presently contains 72 unpatented mining claims, it has been judged to possess no more than low mineral potential by both BLM and the U.S. Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines. The latter two agencies conducted a survey of the area and published their results in 1987. Existing grazing use is compatible with wilderness designation and can continue. Because wilderness values are so significant, the suitability



T13N
T12N

-  RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS
-  RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS
-  LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

-  SPLIT ESTATE
-  STATE
-  PRIVATE



**Fort Piute
Proposal
MAP-1**

0 1 2 3
MILES

CDCA-267
JUNE, 1988

recommendation will preclude any further vehicular use of approximately 20 miles of primitive access routes of travel. Although off-highway vehicle use will be displaced from 20 miles of presently approved routes, the proposed wilderness boundary will remain accessible to both highway and off-highway vehicles.

The area recommended for nonwilderness contains evidence of past mineral exploration and development which reduce the area's naturalness. It also contains 377 active unpatented mining claims, and exhibits moderate to high potential for gold, perlite, and clay.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	46,086
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		637
Private		1,603
Total		<u>48,326</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	34,854
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>34,854</u>
Inholdings ¹		
State		0
Private		1,589
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	11,232
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>11,232</u>

¹ Appendix 1 is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with Federal surface and non Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non Federal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The portion of the WSA recommended for wilderness contains little evidence of past human use or occupation. Traces of human activity include some isolated mining prospects, claim markers, and localized traces of vehicular use on ways or in washes. Most of these occur in the northern portion of the WSA recommended for nonwilderness and are substantially unnoticeable within the area as a whole.
2. Solitude: Rugged mountains, deep canyons, and spacious valleys provide visual screening, when combined with the area's low visitation, assure ample opportunities for solitude.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Diverse terrain features and availability of water provide opportunities for activities such as hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, nature study, and photography.
4. Special Features: Piute Creek is the only perennial stream in the eastern Mojave Desert, around which are concentrated the majority of this WSA's other special features. The permanent surface water originating at Piute Springs flows for over a mile before disappearing into a sandy wash, supporting one of the largest riparian woodlands in the California desert. This woodland has been designated an Unusual Plant Assemblage by BLM.

The water and riparian habitat of the creek supports a diverse wildlife population. With an overstory of willow (Salix gooddingii) and cottonwood (Populus fremontii), this ten-acre woodland supports a bird population many times more dense and with a greater species diversity than the surrounding desert. Over 100 species of birds, including raptors and game birds, have been recorded here. The creek is a crucial water source for the Piute Range's estimated permanent population of 25 desert bighorn sheep, a BLM sensitive species. Throughout the entire range only four water sources exist, and three are man-made. The probability of development of a large goldmine outside the Northwest boundary of the WSA and the associated ground water pumping brings with it the concern that pumping will decrease flow at Piute Spring. Monitoring of ground water levels and flow at the spring are planned to ensure protection of the Piute Spring water source.

Piute Creek has a long and colorful history of human occupation. Some of the most important information on the prehistory and history of the Mojave Desert has been derived from archeological investigations completed in and around Piute Canyon and the Piute Range. Located near the mouth of Piute Canyon are the ruins of the stone walls of Fort Piute, constructed in the 1860s as an outpost on the Mojave Road. The road is proposed as a National Historic Trail.

Prior to the establishment of the Mojave Road, the area received considerable use by Native Americans. The cultural resources in this area include petroglyphs, aboriginal trails, and the fort, and have been listed as a district on the National Register of Historic Places. In recognition of the need to protect the area's outstanding natural and cultural values, Piute Creek was designated an ACEC. The ACEC management plan was completed in 1982.

A second Unusual Plant Assemblage (UPA), the Lanfair Valley Desert Grassland, is located on the western margin of the WSA. No sensitive, threatened, or endangered plants, or candidates for threatened or endangered listing are known to occur within either UPA or the remainder of the WSA.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 46,086 acres of the American Desert/Creosote bush (Larrea) ecosystem. The combination of a dense riparian woodland, a perennial water supply, and an extensive array of cultural resources make this WSA a unique area within the East Mojave National Scenic Area and the California Desert Conservation Area.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BIM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,221,823
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,608,019

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of three major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of wilderness areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of these population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The closest designated wilderness area is the Joshua Tree Wilderness in Joshua Tree National Monument, about 100 air miles southwest. There are 14 BLM study areas recommended for wilderness designation within 50 air miles of the Fort Piute WSA. Eight are within the California Desert District, five are within Arizona's Phoenix District, and one is in Nevada's Las Vegas District.

C. Manageability

The recommended wilderness portion of the Fort Piute WSA is manageable as wilderness.

The recommended nonwilderness portion is unmanageable, because of its large number of mining claims coupled with the area's moderate to high potential for gold, perlite, and clay. The high mineral potential suggests that even if wilderness designation occurred many of the claims would be found valid, allowing development to proceed. It would be impossible to maintain wilderness values in the area of actual mining activity, and in areas through which access roads would be developed. In addition, opportunities for solitude would decline in adjacent areas.

Presently, one guzzler for desert bighorn sheep is located within the WSA. Maintenance of this guzzler is required approximately two times per year and normally requires mechanized equipment and vehicles for transportation of materials to the site.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Fort Piute WSA is located in the BLM Homer Mountain Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). GRA data in 1980 indicated that the northwest corner of the WSA contains a moderate occurrence potential for clay, perlite and gold. In addition, the 1980 GRA indicated a low occurrence potential for uranium and/or thorium over a broad area of the suitable portion of the WSA based on airborne geophysical surveys. There are several perlite quarries noted in the GRA in the northernmost corner of the WSA, north of Hart Peak near the California-Nevada boundary. An estimated 100,000 tons of perlite had been produced from these quarries by 1952.
2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should be Considered in the Final Recommendation: A U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral survey was conducted for the portion of the WSA recommended suitable for wilderness designation. The USGS and BOM published the results of their survey in Bulletin 1713-C in 1987. Bulletin 1713-C indicates that the Oro Belle gold mine adjacent to the northwest boundary of the WSA produced 3,000 to 4,000 tons of ore during the 1940s, averaging 0.34 ounces/ton.

Bulletin 1713-C indicates that areas along the southeast, northeast and north-central portions of the WSA with anomalous gold readings from a geochemical survey has low potential for the occurrence of gold. Within the southeastern portion of the WSA, the USGS/BOM classifies the area as having a moderate potential for gold. A small area adjacent to the northwest boundary of the WSA has been classified by the USGS and BOM as having a high occurrence potential for gold (See Map 2). This area is adjacent to the Hart gold mining district to the west and south of the WSA boundary, an area that includes numerous gold mines associated with rhyolite vents. The same hot mineral solutions that deposited the gold and pyrite have moved laterally into the bedrock and altered the rhyolite to clay in some places. For this reason, the area classified by the USGS and BOM as having a moderate occurrence potential for gold along the northwest corner of the WSA, corresponds, for the most part, with the same moderate potential occurrence classification for clay minerals. The USGS and BOM confirm the occurrence of large clay deposits in the south end of the Castle Mountains.

In 1985, the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) completed their mineral resource classification of the Ivanpah, Crescent Peak, and Searchlight 15-minute quadrangles, which include the northern part of the WSA. The study was published as Open File Report OFR 85-71A. A previous Open File Report by CDMG (OFR 84-30SAC) covers the south part of the WSA. The later CDMG study covers the entire Castle Mountains and north part of the Piute Range and includes all the known gold, clay and perlite areas identified in the 1980 GRA. The CDMG classification of land having a moderate potential for gold, clay, and perlite compares very closely with the 1980 BLM GRA classification, as shown on Map 2. The low potential area identified by the USGS and BOM is also supported by the CDMG study.

Historically, gold and pyrite had been mined along northeast-striking fracture zones in Tertiary rhyolite and rhyolite breccia. These mines worked at different intervals between 1913 and 1942 and several thousand tons of gold ore were produced, although the exact production is not known. The potential for the occurrence of both gold and clay deposits within the north corner of the WSA is moderate to high under the BLM classification system because of the extension of similar geology extending into the suitable portion of the WSA, and the area's proximity to known gold and clay production.

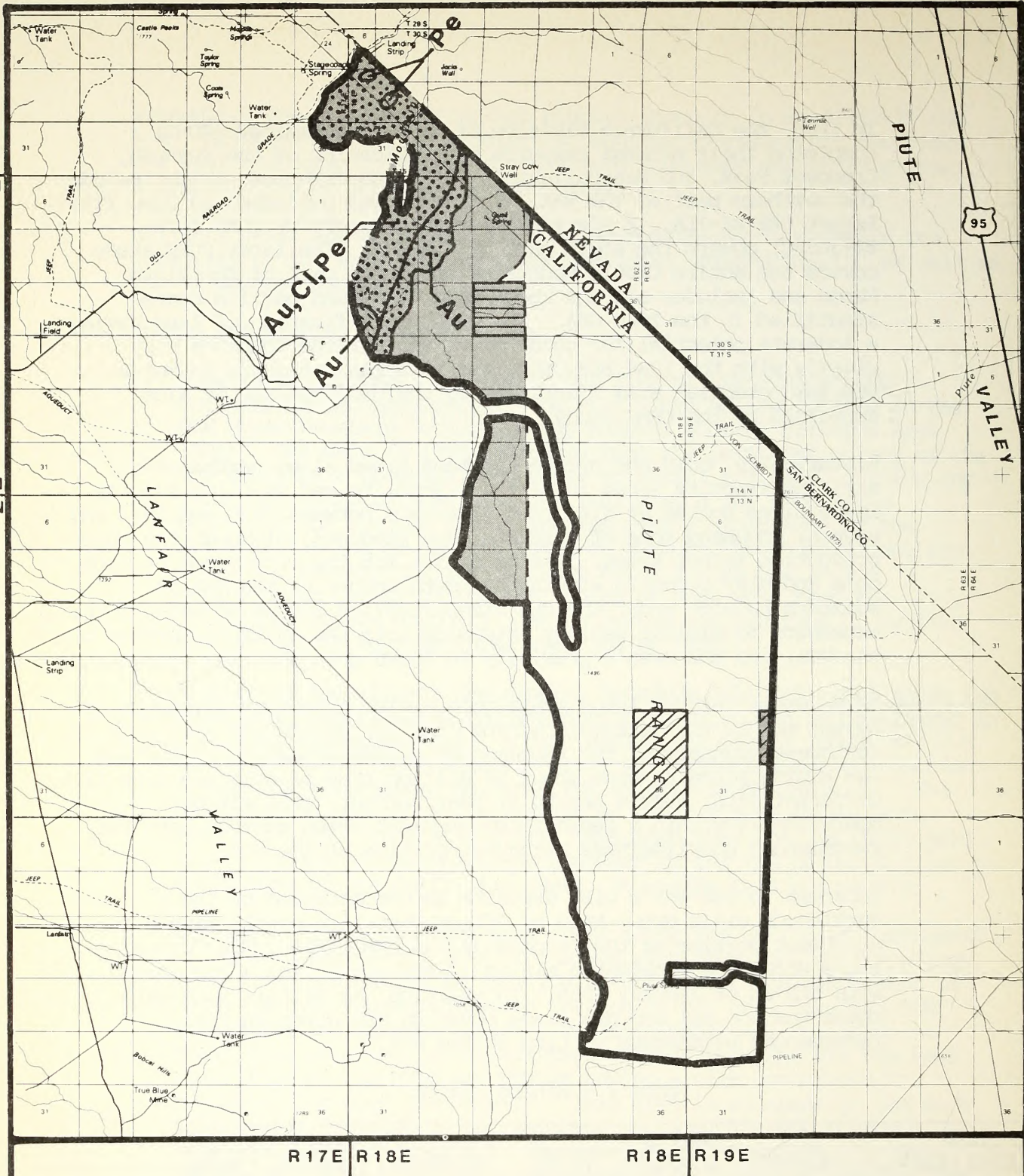
In November 1987, a large scale gold mining operation was approved by the BLM in the Hart gold mining district within one mile from the northwest boundary of the recommended suitable portion of the WSA. B&B Mining plans to mine about 30 million tons of gold ore from five different pits, over a ten to 12 year period. This mining operation is within a geologic environment which extends into the recommended nonwilderness northwest portion of the WSA.







Interest in the WSA's clay deposits is demonstrated by the Turtleback claim group held by Pfizer that lies partly within the northwest portion of the recommended suitable WSA. The following table shows the unpatented mining claims within the WSA recorded with BLM as of January 1988. In addition, as of this same date there was one oil and gas lease covering 580 acres in the recommended wilderness portion of the WSA.

Table 4 - Mining Claims



TYPE MINING CLAIM	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	32	377	409	640	7540	8180
Placer	40	0	40	1600	0	1600
Mill Site	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	72	377	449	2240	7540	9780

T 13 N
T 12 N



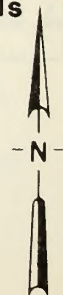
- | | |
|---|---|
|  | Recommended for Wilderness |
|  | Recommended for Non Wilderness |
|  | Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness |
|  | Split Estate |
|  | State |
|  | Private |

Explanation

- | | |
|---|--|
|  | High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
|  | Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals |
| M | Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area |
| H | High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area |

Commodity Symbols

Au Gold
Cl Clay
Pe Perlite



Fort Piute

Mineral Resource Potential

A horizontal scale bar with tick marks at 0, 1, 2, and 3. The word "MILES" is centered below the bar.

MAP-2
CDCA-267

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values will be maintained on the part of the WSA to be designated wilderness. Over time, wilderness values will be lost on the remaining 23% of the WSA as a result of mineral exploration and development.
2. Impact on Motorized Recreation: Approximately 20 miles of washes and primitive ways will be closed to all motorized use.
3. Impact on Mineral Exploration and Development: All areas within the WSA deemed to have moderate or high mineral potential will remain nonwilderness, and will therefore be unaffected by the proposed action. The part of the WSA that will be designated wilderness and withdrawn from mineral entry, exhibits low mineral potential.
4. Impact on Cultural Resources: Elimination of vehicular access will reduce vandalism in the Fort Piute ACEC. Access restrictions will be placed on resource stabilization and scientific excavation.
5. Impact on Biological Resources of the Fort Piute ACEC: Elimination of vehicle access along lower Piute Creek will have a beneficial impact on the riparian woodland habitat and wildlife.
6. Impact on Native American Values: The designation will augment opportunities for Native American traditional use. Motor vehicle use will be eliminated from the wilderness area, causing a minor adverse effect on access to sacred areas.
7. Impact on Bighorn Sheep Habitat: There will be negligible impact. Maintenance of water sources will be more difficult. Elimination of motorized use will help improve habitat.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Known inaccuracies are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Many comments referred to the mining activity around Hart. All known mining areas have been excluded. Other comments supported inclusion of the area for its wilderness qualities.

2. Study Phase: Thirty comments were received on this WSA 267. These were equally divided into support for wilderness designation and multiple use. Proponents of wilderness status cited the following qualities which make the Piute Range worthy of wilderness designation: riparian habitats, Joshua trees in dense concentrations at lower elevations, bighorn sheep, gila monster habitats rare in California, (the gila monster is not considered rare by any Federal or State agency) and the endangered Mojave chub (the Mojave chub is not known to exist within the WSA). Also mentioned were a high elevation spring, archeological and historical values, varied mammal and bird life, scientific values, and a geologically spectacular hike through Piute Canyon. The following suggestions were made for the area: include the northwest portion in the wilderness recommendation; make a special designation of the area for its ecological and historic values; and coordinate with Nevada for across the border protection of resources.

Opponents of wilderness designation listed the following arguments against further wilderness study for this area: heavy vehicle use, the proximity of "ugly, buzzing" powerlines, the flyover of jets, the presence of isolated private property, grazing potential of the area, and the presence of historical values. Potential was said to exist for gold, silver, clay, and borates. Castle Mountain is a good source of clay. Kaolin and montmorillonite clay are found in the western section of the WSA; the same area has oil, gas, and geothermal potential. Rockhounds explore on the western side of Hart Peak.

Several comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook. Three described their experiences hiking, camping, studying nature, and enjoying the serenity of the area. They urged the protection of the area from vehicle-oriented recreation, petroglyph vandals, and hunters. Pfizer, a chemical company, requested a boundary adjustment near the C-1 mine.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: No public comments specific to WSA 267 were received in response to the Draft Plan. The National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups, recommended this area for moderate intensity multiple use. A large number of club members sent in coupons or letters supporting this position. Conservation organizations approved the Protection Alternative, which recommended this WSA for wilderness status. Thus, they requested that the entire WSA be designated wilderness.
4. Proposed Plan: General input was similar to that for the Draft Plan. The Citizens for Mojave National Park requested that the entire WSA be included as wilderness.

No comments were received from local governments.

APPENDIX 1
ESTIMATED COSTS OF ACQUISITION OF NON-FEDERAL HOLDINGS WITHIN
AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR DESIGNATION
FORT PIUTE WSA (CDCA-267)

PARCEL No.	LEGAL DESCRIPTION				TOTAL ACREAGE	NUMBER OF OWNERS	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP BY ESTATE		PRESENTLY PROPOSED FOR ACQUISITION	PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION	ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	
	TWNSHP	RNG	SEC	MERIDIAN			SURFACE ESTATE	SUBSURFACE ESTATE			LAND COSTS (\$1000)	PROCESSING COSTS (\$1000)
1	13N.	18E.	25	SBM	640	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	4.0
2	13N.	18E.	36	SBM	640	1	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	YES	EXCHANGE	N/A	2.5

These figures were derived from Bureau Land Records and provide for more detail than GIS estimates and therefore may differ from acreage summaries in Table 1.

Table Mountain

CDCA 270

TABLE MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-270)

1. THE STUDY AREA --- 9,207 acres

The Table Mountain WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 8,452 acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and private inholdings totaling approximately 755 acres. No split-estate land exists within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

Beginning one-quarter mile south of Government Holes, the west boundary follows the base of the mountains south for six miles. The boundary then turns northeast following a graded ranch road for approximately one mile until it intersects with a short spur road heading northwest for one and one-fourth miles. This spur road is utilized for ranching purposes and is cherrystemmed from the WSA. The boundary then traverses southeast for one mile following no discernible topographic features, then intersects and follows a graded ranch road northeast. The remaining eastern boundary was drawn to exclude existing mining operations. In the southeast quarter of section 7, T. 12 N., R. 16 E., the northeastern boundary intersects with Cedar Canyon Road, heads north and west for two and one-half miles following the southern berm of the road, excluding Rock Springs.

The WSA is completely within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated in 1980 by the Secretary of the Interior as part of the CDCA Plan. Portions of the WSA (440 acres) are also contained within the Camp Rock Spring Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) which encompasses 660 acres within and adjacent to the northern portion of the WSA and includes approximately one half mile of the historic Mojave Road.

The study area contains landforms consisting of 55% hills, 25% pediments, 15% alluvial fans and 5% river washes. The WSA is dominated by Table Mountain, a volcanic mesa rising 1000 feet above Gold Valley to an elevation of 6,176 feet above sea level. A number of smaller volcanic hills and rounded granite landforms encompass the eastern slopes of Table Mountain proper. Overall, the area embraces a small, rugged, mountainous interior skirted by flat valleys on the southeast side of the WSA.

The WSA contains a representation of lifezones characteristic of the higher elevations of the Mojave Desert and also contains sensitive wildlife and cultural resources (see Special Features). Vegetation consists primarily of Great Basin sagebrush, pinyon pine, utah juniper, blackbrush, fourwing saltbush, bitterbrush, and grama grasses. The lower elevations of the WSA support a mixed desert scrub community consisting of creosote bush, buckwheat, brittlebrush, various species of cacti, Mojave yucca, an occasional Joshua tree, black grama, desert needlegrass, and big galleta

grass. No BLM sensitive plants, and no Federal- or State-listed rare, threatened or endangered plants are known to occur in this WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS. Two different suitability recommendations were analyzed in the EIS: all wilderness and no wilderness.

2.	<u>RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE</u> ---	0	acres recommended for wilderness
		8,452	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The no-wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale:

(1) the WSA does not contain any noteworthy special features not currently within or recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS); (2) primitive recreation opportunities are dependent upon an off-highway vehicle (OHV) for access; (3) there is a considerable demand for continued motorized vehicle use along the Mojave Road; and (4) large portions of the area have moderate potential for one or more of the following commodities: gold, silver, and copper.

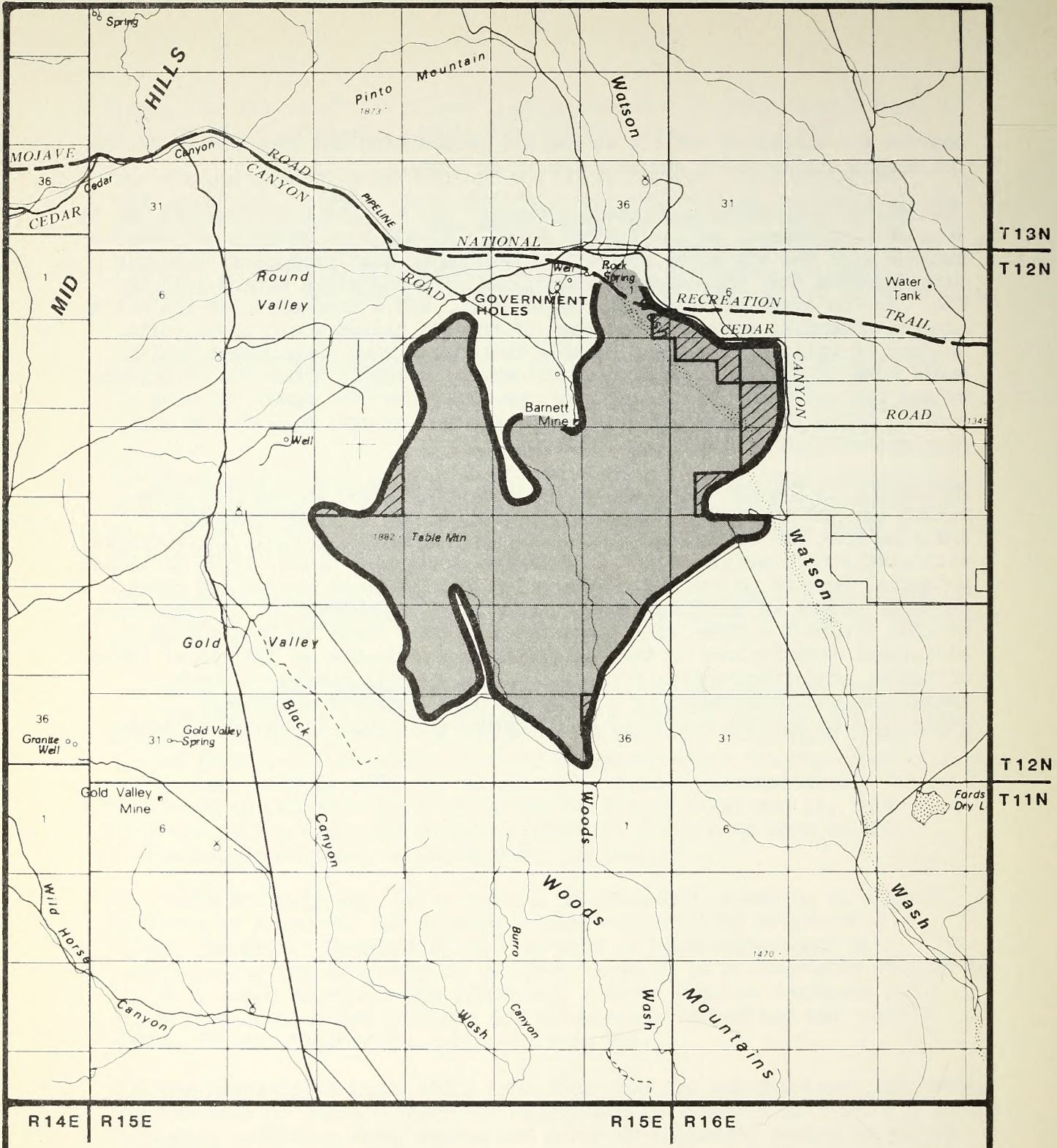
The Table Mountain WSA, while natural in character, contains no unusual features or resources not currently within an existing or proposed wilderness area. Designation of this area as wilderness would not contribute to the diversity of the NWPS since it is ecologically similar to the Providence Mountains WSA (CDCA-263) and the Granite Mountains WSA (CDCA-256) recommended suitable for wilderness designation and located within 50 air miles of the Table Mountain WSA.

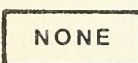





The WSA consists of lands which have been used for vehicle-based recreation for the last 30 years. There are approximately 15 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. The past few years have seen a steady increase in the demands for motorized vehicle access along primitive routes and washes which traverse the WSA. Recreationists use the area for photography, nature study and geologic field reconnaissance, and most visitors visiting the area for these purposes use a vehicle for access. Interests in hiking, horseback riding, hunting, rockhounding, nature study, and camping pursuits have also increased along with the

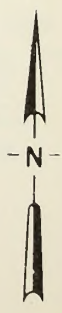
demands for motorized vehicle access for prospecting and exploration on the 103 mining claims which encumber the study area.

The WSA has a moderate occurrence potential for a variety of minerals and is presently encumbered by 103 mining claims. Although an attempt was made to exclude from the WSA mines which have been major past producers, geologic data suggests that the deposits associated with the mines extend into the WSA. In the event of wilderness designation, BLM's assessment of the WSA's mineral potential suggests that some of the 103 claims would prove valid. Holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with development, which would make it difficult to protect wilderness values. Since the wilderness values are not unique to the CDCA or the NWPS, the WSA appears to have greater value for carefully managed OHV use and mineral exploration and development than it does for wilderness.

Management of the WSA under the guidelines established in the CDCA Plan allows for low intensity, carefully controlled use of resources while ensuring that sensitive values are not significantly altered. This, coupled with restrictive actions cited in existing management plans, serve to lessen potential impacts to the WSA. Protection of wilderness values and other resource values is being addressed through the implementation of management actions within the EMNSA Plan completed in 1988. These actions include additional restrictions on the use of firearms, closure of additional routes of travel, requirement of a performance bond for all surface disturbing activities and enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas.



- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|--|
|  NONE | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  SPLIT ESTATE |
|  RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS | |  STATE |
|  LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS | |  PRIVATE |



**Table Mountain
Proposal
MAP-1**



TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	8,452
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		755
Total		<u>9,207</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	8,452
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>8,452</u>

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Overall, the WSA is essentially untrammelled by man although small portions of the landscape have been modified by human activity. Prior to the 1960s, historic use of the Table Mountain WSA was generally restricted to mineral exploration and hunting. The WSA's location within the scenic area more recently attracted recreationists interested in hiking, horseback riding, sightseeing, photography, and hunting. Most of these visitors utilize an OHV for access. The small size of the WSA coupled with the ruggedness of the majority of the interior confines vehicle use to Woods Wash which traverses the heart of the study area. Damage to vegetation in the washes is minimal and the visual impacts of these uses are essentially erased following each rain. A mining plan of operation, authorized in 1985, has altered the naturalness and negatively impacts the viewshed within the north-central portion of the WSA. Although reclamation has been completed, the scars remaining on the five acres act to reduce the natural character within this portion of the study area.
2. Solitude: The interior areas offer some places of seclusion and opportunities for solitude. Table Mountain itself is like a remote island, its steep sides barring all but a few from its juniper-forested plateau.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Opportunities for Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The area contains limited opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Although available, most use is in conjunction with other areas outside of the WSA including the Woods Mountains WSA (CDCA-271) located adjacent to the south boundary of the Table Mountain WSA.
4. Special Features: The Mojave Road traverses the entire East Mojave National Scenic Area from east to west and passes just inside the WSA's northern border. Established in the 1860's as a wagon route, the "Government Road" provided an important land line between Prescott, Arizona and Los Angeles. The Mojave Road is one of the premier recreation attractions in the East Mojave and continues to attract thousands of travellers each year who traverse the 130-mile course from the Colorado River through the Mojave Desert. The road has been nominated as a National Recreational Trail and is also included in the Camp Rock Spring ACEC.

Historic Camp Rock Spring, one of several military posts and the only official United States Army Camp between Camp Cady and Fort Mojave on the Mojave Road, was occupied for a period of little more than a year from December 30, 1866, until May, 1868. Prior to that time, the spring and the Mojave Road were inhabited and used by prehistoric people who left behind remnants of the material culture in the form of stone tools and petroglyphs.

Wildlife resources within the WSA are no doubt limited by the size of the range and the lack of any permanent water sources. Table Mountain and the adjacent vicinity are used for foraging by prairie falcons and golden eagles. Other bird species of limited distribution present here include the gilded thrasher and Bendire's thrasher. The Panamint kangaroo rat, at one time a BLM proposed sensitive species, is present on four square miles of the WSA. Portions of the WSA support a transient population of mule deer and desert bighorn sheep, a BLM sensitive species.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The Table Mountain WSA contains 8,452 acres of the American Desert/Creosote bush (Larrea) ecosystem. This ecosystem is currently represented within the NWPS. This same ecosystem is present within the Granite, North Providence, South Providence and Castle Peaks WSA's, all recommended for wilderness designation and within a two hour drive of the Table Mountain WSA.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification <u>Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,259,457
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,645,653

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of five major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of seven BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 160 miles southwest of the Table Mountain WSA.

C. Manageability

The Table Mountain WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, several issues would complicate manageability as such. The north boundary is adjacent to the well-travelled county maintained Cedar Canyon Road. Recreationists enter the WSA via Cedar Canyon Road and traverse south along Woods Wash through the heart of the study area. This wash effectively splits the WSA into two areas. Numerous ways and washes provide visitors access back and forth between the Woods Mountains to the south and Cedar Canyon Road and the New York Mountains to the north. Two developed campgrounds lie within ten miles of the WSA. Each received an estimated 5000 visitor-use days in 1987, with some of their use spilling over into the WSA. Most of the north and southwest boundaries are not readily definable on the ground. The WSA's tradition of recreational use patterns combined with the lack of landmarks to delineate the majority of the boundary would create a need for constant patrol should the WSA be designated as wilderness.

The WSA contains areas of moderate potential for a variety of minerals and is presently encumbered by 103 unpatented mining claims. Although wilderness designation would withdraw the area from claim location, BLM's assessment of the area's mineral potential suggests that some of the existing claims would prove valid. Holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with developments deemed necessary or reasonably incidental to their mining operation, subject only to not causing unnecessary or undue degradation. This provision would do little to

protect wilderness values as even necessary mining developments could significantly alter natural conditions at the site and potentially disrupt naturalness and opportunities for solitude over a much greater area.

Designation as wilderness would also conflict with continued motorized vehicle use of the Mojave Road as it would be closed to any further motorized use. This closure would likely generate organized opposition from regional and national groups and would prove extremely difficult to keep off limits to vehicles. Should the area be designated as wilderness, the Bureau is recommending that a corridor be established within the WSA which would allow for continued use along the road.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known at the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: According to the Geology-Energy-Mineral (GEM) assessment for the Hackberry GEM Resource Area (GRA), the Table Mountain WSA shows moderate potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, lead and copper.

Anomalous geochemical values in rare earths, zirconium, manganese, and titanium, as well as positive magnetic, gamma-ray spectrometer and lineament anomalies strongly suggest a favorable environment for metallic mineralization in the mountainous areas of the WSA. Mineralization is concentrated in the mid-northern portion of the WSA extending south from the Barnett Mine, as shown on Map 2. The Barnett Mine lies approximately two and one-half miles northeast of Table Mountain. This mine was worked in 1911-15, during which 160 tons of high grade gold, silver, copper, and lead ore were extracted. Just south of this mine, ore containing the same precious and base metals was also produced in another mine. Aside from these producers, many shafts and prospect pits related to metallic mineral exploration exist throughout the WSA. The mineralization is mainly within quartz veins that are in or adjacent to a north-south fault all in Cretaceous porphyritic quartz monzonite.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Decision: No U.S. Geological Survey inventory or U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral survey was completed for this WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) completed a mineral resource assessment of the Mid Hills quadrangle map which included the Table Mountain WSA. These results were published in OFR 85-81A. The CDMG reports shows a north-south fault through the

Barnett Mine and extending through the K&S Mine (about one-half of a mile south of the Barnett Mine within the WSA.) There was continued exploration along this fault zone in 1987, on a claim group shown as the K&S Mine. A large open cut (15 feet wide by 30 feet high) in the hillside at K&S Mine shows an altered zone about five feet to eight feet in quartz monzonite. No assays have been made by the BLM verifying mineralization of this altered structure.

The CDMG report identified an east-west fault zone abutting the north-south Barnett Mine trend and classified this structure as having a moderate potential for gold, silver and copper. This classification was based on plutonic contacts and stock work veins system within the host rock. CDMG also classified the north-south Barnett fault zone as having a moderate potential for silver and gold. This supports the moderate potential classification in the 1980 GEM assessment by BLM.

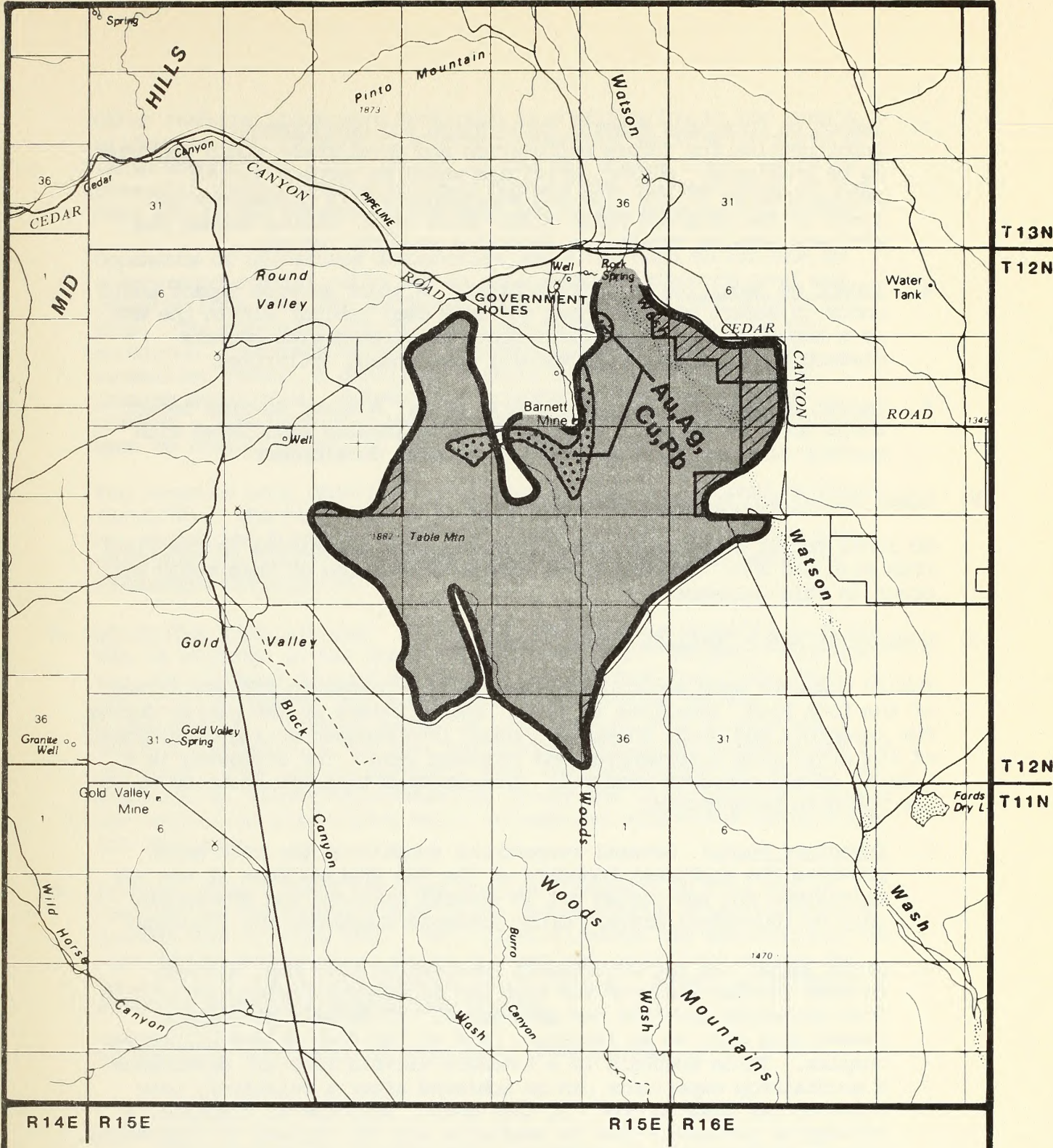
Exploration interest for gold and silver outside of the WSA, approximately one-fourth mile north of the Barnett Mine was completed in October, 1987. One other plan of operation has been authorized within the WSA, but as yet no work has been completed. The following table summarizes unpatented mining claims on file with BLM as of December 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
MINING CLAIM						
Lode	N/A	93	93	N/A	1,860	1,860
Placer	N/A	8	8	N/A	320	320
Mill Site	N/A	2	2	N/A	10	10
Total	N/A	103	103	N/A	2,190	2,190

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: There would be no immediate adverse impact. Over time, existing wilderness values could gradually decline as a result of the projected increase in OHV recreation. Wilderness values may also experience moderate adverse site-specific impacts as a result of noise and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development.
2. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use would continue and increase over time on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the EMNSA Plan. Motorized recreation use on the historic Mojave Road would continue and be managed by guidelines established in the EMNSA Plan.



- NONE Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

- Explanation**
- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
 - Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
 - M** Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
 - H** High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

- Commodity Symbols**
- Ag** Silver
 - Au** Gold
 - Cu** Copper
 - Pb** Lead

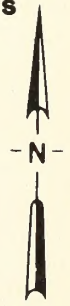
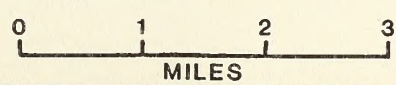


Table Mountain
Mineral Resource Potential



3. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development would continue to be available. Mining activities would be subject to the regulations at 43 CFR 3809 and additional policy guidelines set forth in the CDCA and EMNSA Plans which limit vehicle access and mitigate adverse impacts on sensitive resource values.
4. Impact on Sensitive Wildlife Habitat: A minor adverse impact would occur to desert bighorn sheep and mule deer habitat within the WSA as a result of site-specific impacts associated with surface disturbance from potential mineral development activities.
5. Impact on Camp Rock Spring Cultural Site: A minor adverse impact would occur as a result of site-specific impacts associated with surface disturbance from potential mineral development.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Several respondents questioned the road which provides the southeast boundary of the WSA stating that it was not maintained and was washed out in several portions and accessible only by four-wheel drive. Other comments supported the findings.
2. Study Phase: Of the 20 comments received on this WSA, sixteen favored further study of the area for wilderness designation, while four preferred multiple use management. Wilderness proponents viewed this unit as an important part of the East Mojave wilderness complex. Table Mountain is a landmark visible from all directions. A mountaintop experience can be achieved after a relatively easy climb to the mesa on top. At this point, solitude is complete, a 360-degree panoramic view is available and the variety of vegetation (pinyon-juniper forest, sagebrush, and cactus) can be enjoyed. Granites and volcanic geology can be observed when climbing or descending the mountain.

Other features which were mentioned as contributing to the area's wilderness quality were 1) a unique sagebrush association north of Table Mountain in Round Valley, 2) the old Mojave Trail, which is a potential riding and hiking trail borders the northern edge of the WSA, and 3) the pristine Woods Wash and Watson Wash to the south.

Opponents of wilderness designation noted the need to exclude an underground coaxial cable and an associated maintenance road and repeater huts near the northeast edge of the unit (not within the WSA). The potential for oil, gas and geothermal resources was mentioned. Evidence of man's presence included mines, wells, windmills, fences, a dwelling, corrals and other evidences of grazing activities. Substantial private inholdings are also present. Also mentioned was the desire to keep this beautiful area open to vehicle access so that it could be enjoyed.

Two comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). The first wished to keep the area open for yucca harvesting which has occurred for several years. The second letter described the author's experience hiking this area and asked for wilderness designation.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were few comments specific to this WSA in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. However, this WSA was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-highway vehicle organizations. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting a multiple use classification of moderate use for the area. This was in agreement with the recommendation of the Use alternative. Conservation-oriented groups and organizations approved the Protection alternative which recommended wilderness designation for this area.
4. Proposed Plan: There were few specific comments on this WSA in response to the proposed plan which recommended a classification of limited use for this unit. This classification was satisfactory for some of the conservation groups but was not protective enough for the Citizens for Mojave National Park and was opposed by vehicle oriented groups who wanted more access.

No comments were received from local governments.

Woods Mountains

CDCA 271

WOODS MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-271)

1. THE STUDY AREA ---

61,275 acres

The Woods Mountains WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeast portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The WSA includes 44,162 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1,793 acres of land belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totaling 15,320 acres. No split-estate lands exist within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The north boundary is formed by a combination of roads and primitive routes, private property lines, natural features, and lines drawn to exclude disturbances. At Ford Dry Lake in the north-central portion of the WSA, the boundary traverses southwest along a graded water pipeline and maintenance road for one and one-half miles. The boundary then forms a cherrystem southeast into Watson Wash for two miles then follows northwest for three miles along a graded dirt road. In T. 12 N. R. 16 E., section 19, the boundary intersects a graded dirt road and trends southwest for three miles. This graded road also forms the southeast boundary of Table Mountain WSA 270. From here, the boundary follows topographical features and skirts the base of Woods Mountains for four miles excluding in part T. 11 N, R. 15 E., section 16. The boundary then follows a graded road one and one half miles until it intersects with a water pipeline and maintenance road which it parallels for six miles, then turns south for four miles where it intersects and follows a utility line and maintenance road east for six miles. The east boundary is formed by a graded dirt road for six miles and Lanfiar Road for three miles. A large area (approximately 800 acres) in the east portion of the study area was excluded from the WSA due to extensive surface disturbance associated with past mining activity. The northeast boundary follows a graded ranch road one and one-half miles southwest and cherrystems the two miles of the road to Hackberry Spring and also the spring. The remainder of the north boundary traverses west four miles until it intersects with Ford Dry Lake. This portion of the WSA boundary follows no discernible topographical features.

Landforms within the WSA consist of 40% hills, 35% alluvial fans, ten percent pediments, 12% dissected fans and 3% river washes encompassing an area roughly 12 miles wide and ten miles long. Two volcanic mountain ranges, the Woods and Hackberry Mountains, are contained within this WSA. These ranges are separated by the expansive well-travelled Watson Wash which runs north-south through the WSA effectively splitting the WSA into two areas. Elevations range from 2,800 feet on the bajadas of Hackberry Mountain to 5,580 feet within the Woods Mountains proper.

The Woods Mountains WSA falls within the category identified as the American Desert Province. Vegetation is characteristic of the higher elevations of the Mojave Desert. Dominant plant species include creosote bush, Joshua tree, numerous perennial grasses and shrubs, single-leaf pinyon and Utah

juniper as well as a variety of cacti. The Woods Mountains contain habitat favorable for the occurrence of two BLM sensitive plant species identified as candidates for listing as endangered or threatened by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (1988). They are Penstemon stephensii (Stephens' beardtongue) and Coryphantha vivipara var. alversonii (Foxtail cactus). Investigations to date have not revealed their occurrence nor the existence of any other Federal- or State-listed rare, threatened, or endangered plant species.

Several special designations overlay the study area. The WSA is completely within the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated in 1980 by the Secretary of the Interior as part of the CDCA Plan. Approximately 120 acres have been withdrawn from mineral entry under Public Land Order 5224 for the protection of recreation and public values. An additional 80 acres within the west portion of T. 11 N., R. 15 E., section 1, SBEM. are also withdrawn from mineral entry to protect sensitive cultural resources.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS. A 1982 plan amendment was considered to change the wilderness recommendation of the western portion of WSA 271 containing the Woods Mountains, from nonsuitable to suitable. The plan amendment was rejected with the rationale that management under limited use guidelines is sufficient protection of the area's wildland values.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE ---

0	acres recommended for wilderness
44,162	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The no wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale: (1) the WSA does not contain any noteworthy special features not currently within or recommended for inclusion into the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS); (2) the demand for recreation opportunities within the WSA is dependent upon an off-highway vehicle (OHV) for access; (3) large portions of the area have moderate potential for a variety of minerals and a large number of mining claims; and (4) the sensitive resources can be protected without wilderness designation through alternative measures identified in existing management plans.

Overall, the landforms and ecosystems typified in the WSA are already well represented in other areas identified for wilderness preservation. Because the resources within the Woods Mountains are not unique when considered in the context of the entire CDCA, little would be gained from its addition to the NWPS. The WSA is ecologically similar to other areas identified for wilderness designation. Within 50 air miles are seven other BLM study areas recommended for addition to the NWPS. Many of these seven areas display the same ecosystem and landforms as this WSA and contain a greater representative sampling of special features than represented in the Woods Mountains. The Providence Mountains WSA (CDCA-263) two miles west, and the Granite Mountains WSA (CDCA-256) 25 air miles southwest, contain over 90,000 acres of public lands which BLM is recommending as wilderness. The Providence and Granite Mountains contain many of the special features identified in the Woods Mountains including yucca and cactus-studded lava plateaus, rock shelters, petroglyphs, and the desert bighorn sheep. Each of these areas also encompasses a larger amount of acreage with fewer conflicting resource issues making manageability of the Providence and Granite Mountains WSAs a more practical endeavor.

There are approximately 20 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. Recreational use within the WSA is moderate and steadily increasing with approximately 1000 visitor-use days annually occurring along the primitive routes and washes located within the study area. Approximately 90% of this use is exclusively motorized and occurs in four concentrated use areas in the WSA: Hackberry Springs, a rockhounding area southwest of the Hackberry Mountain; Woods Wash petroglyph area; Watson Wash, and the 25 square mile Hackberry Mountains. The area provides excellent opportunities for hunting of dove, quail, and chukar. Fossil and petrified wood collecting occurs in the Hackberry Mountains, as does considerable rockhounding. There is one teaching and research site used numerous times annually by university groups. Hiking, dry camping, nature study, photography, and OHV touring are major recreational pursuits in the WSA with most users entering the WSA from Lanfair Road which forms the eastern boundary or from Watson Wash which traverses the entire WSA north to south. These activities are dependent upon motorized vehicles for access and would be displaced by wilderness designation.

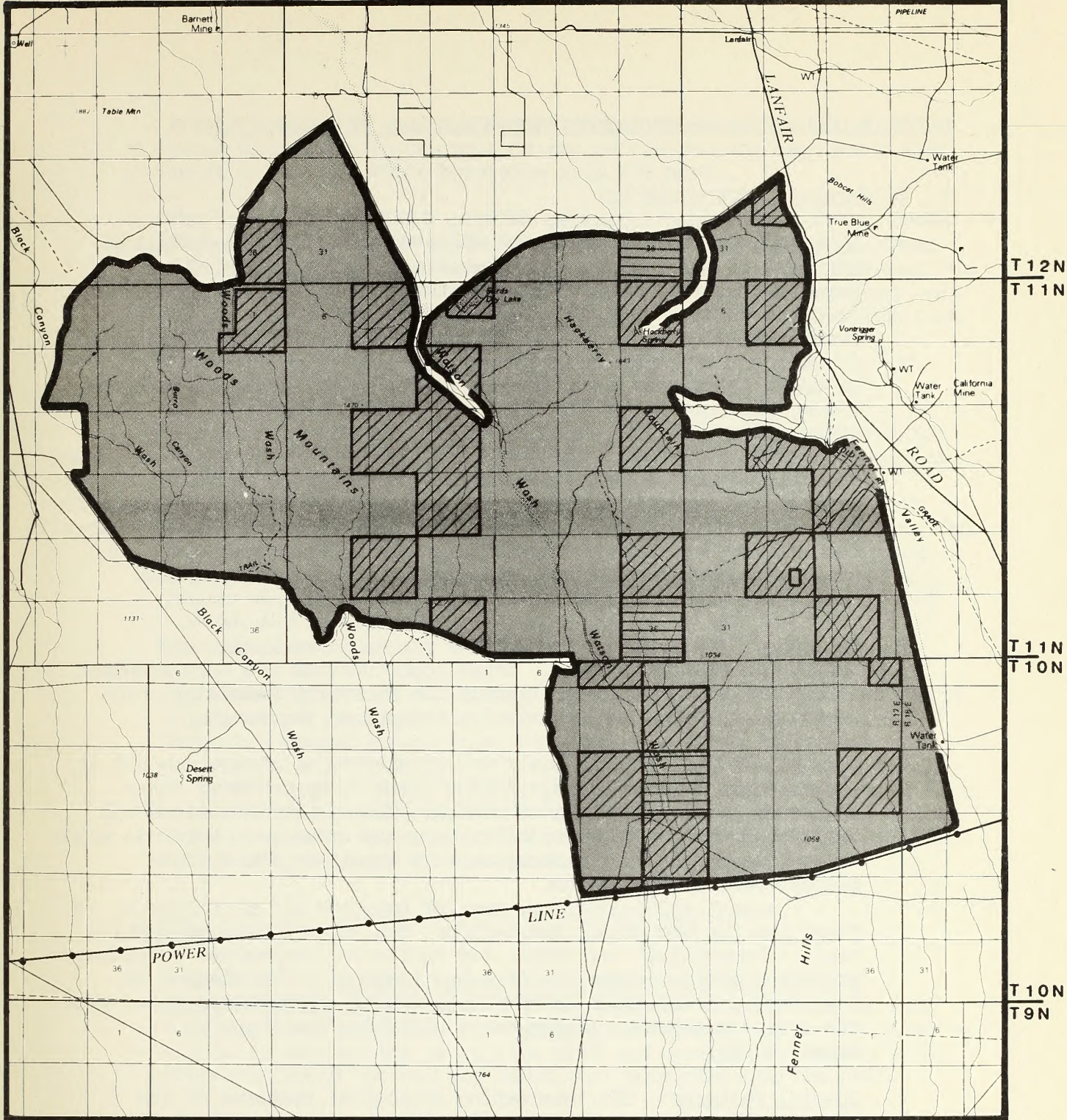
The WSA contains areas of moderate potential for a variety of minerals. The eastern portion of the study area has a long history of mining and is presently encumbered by 590 mining claims encompassing 30% of the overall WSA acreage. Although an attempt was made to exclude from the WSA mines which have been major past producers, BLM's assessment of the WSA's mineral potential suggest that some of the 590 mining claims would prove valid. Holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with development which would make manageability as wilderness a difficult task.

Management of the WSA under the guidelines established in the CDCA Plan allows for low intensity, carefully controlled use of resources while ensuring that sensitive values are not significantly altered. Protection of wilderness and other resource values is being addressed through the

implementation of management actions within the EMNSA Plan completed in 1988. Implementation of management actions within the EMNSA Plan specific to the Woods Mountains WSA include additional monitoring and mitigation measures, detailed recordation and subsurface testing of archaeological complexes, closure of routes, requirement of a performance bond for all surface disturbing activities, enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to minimize the level of surface disturbance allowed in sensitive areas and acquisition of all the private and State lands within the study area.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	44,162
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		1,793
Private		15,320
Total		61,275
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		0
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	44,162
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		44,162



NONE

RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

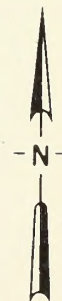
SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

**Woods Mountains
Proposal
MAP-1**

0 1 2 3
MILES



CDCA-271
JUNE, 1988

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: The WSA is essentially untrammelled by man although portions of the landscape have been modified by human activity. Extensive mining roads, prospects on private lands which penetrate into the WSA seriously degrade the wilderness qualities in the Hackberry Mountains portion of the WSA. Approximately 20 miles of routes, scattered range improvements, wildlife guzzlers, shafts and prospect holes also occur throughout the study area. Prior to the 1960s, historic use of the WSA was generally restricted to rockhounding, mineral exploration and recreationists interested primarily in hunting. The WSA's location within the EMNSA has, more recently, attracted visitors interested in hiking, horseback riding, sightseeing, and photography with most using an OHV for access. The primary route of travel is Watson Wash which bisects the study area north to south. Damage to vegetation in the wash is minimal, and the visual impacts of these activities are essentially erased following each rain.
2. Solitude: The interior areas offer places of seclusion and opportunities for solitude. These opportunities are more abundant within the Woods Mountains than in the Hackberry Mountains which contain less topographic variation and sparse vegetation.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The Woods Mountains contain ample topographical variation, few trails and vegetative screening providing abundant room for numerous visitors. The absence of topographical variation in the eastern half of the WSA coupled with the sparse vegetation limits one's abilities for these opportunities.
4. Special Features: The interesting ecological features of the Woods/Hackberry mountains are primarily associated with the flora. Four Unusual Plant Assemblages (UPAs) occur in the WSA: Vegetation associated with Seeps and Springs UPA, the Woods/Hackberry Mountains Succulent Shrub UPA, and portions of the Lanfair Valley Desert Grassland UPA and Hackberry/Woods/Providence Mountains Huge Mojave Yucca UPA. Although most of the vegetation of the WSA is typical of the higher elevations within the Mojave Desert, some exceptional stands of cacti exist adjacent to Woods Wash where it passes through the eastern portion of the Woods Mountains. These cactus gardens have mixtures of barrel, cholla, mammillaria and prickly pear

interspersed with the huge Mojave yucca. Assemblages of cacti and yucca also occur in the uplands and in the canyons near Woods Wash as it enters the Woods Mountains from the north.

The Hackberry Mountains provide permanent habitat for 20-30 desert bighorn sheep, a BLM sensitive species. An estimated 15-20 sheep occur in the Woods Mountains and very likely move freely between the two ranges. Mule deer can be found in the Woods Mountains but only on a transient basis. A number of wildlife water developments occur in the WSA. Raptors such as golden eagles, prairie falcons, red-legged hawks, and several owls use the WSA for foraging and nesting.

The southern portion of the WSA falls within the Fenner/Chemehuevi Valleys Habitat Management Area (HMA). This HMA was designated as part of the CDCA Plan and outlines management prescriptions primarily for the desert tortoise, a BLM sensitive species which is currently under status review by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife service for listing as a threatened species. Population densities reach as high as 100 to 250 individuals per square mile in Fenner Valley. Fenner Valley is considered to be highly crucial habitat for this species and approximately ten square miles of WSA 271 may be considered such.

Approximately 20% of the public lands within the WSA are considered highly sensitive/significant in terms of cultural resources. Temporary campsites and rock art sites also occur throughout the private lands within the WSA. Two sites within the WSA have been withdrawn from mineral entry to protect exceptional examples of rock art in Woods Wash and the Woods Mountains. Four other petroglyph sites are known to occur in the study area. Portions of the WSA were utilized by both the Mohave and Chemehuevi peoples.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System
(NWPS)

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: The WSA contains 44,162 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush (*Larrea*) ecosystem. This ecosystem is currently represented within the NWPS and designation of the Woods Mountains would not add any additional ecosystems to the NWPS.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,223,747
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,609,943

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of five major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,958,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas: The WSA is within 50 air miles of seven BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is in Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 120 miles southwest of the Woods Mountains WSA.

C. Manageability

The WSA is manageable as wilderness although several significant issues would complicate manageability as such.

The amount of private inholdings and the mosaic pattern of land ownership makes it extremely difficult to assure that existing wilderness values can be maintained in the foreseeable future. Reasonable access to the majority of the inholdings does not currently exist. Anticipated use and development of these inholdings would conflict with wilderness values.

The WSA is favored by rockhounds and other recreationists who require motorized vehicles for access. Designation would close some 20 miles of washes and primitive routes currently used by these interest groups. Enforcement of the vehicle closure along Watson Wash would be difficult due to the numerous access routes leading to this heavily used area.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known At the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Woods Mountains WSA is in the BLM Hackberry Geology-Energy-Mineral (GEM) Resource Area (GRA). Anomalous geochemical values in rare earths, zirconium, manganese, and titanium as well as positive magnetic, gamma-ray spectrometer, and lineament anomalies strongly suggest a favorable environment for metallic mineralization in the mountainous areas of the WSA. In particular, uranium, thorium, and potassium gamma-ray values correlate well with one another in the Woods Mountain and Hackberry Mountain areas. This evidence, in conjunction with a circular negative bouguer gravity anomaly in this area (which may indicate ore genesis or control) and the many fault systems, suggests the likelihood of uranium and thorium mineralization in portions of the WSA. A uranium occurrence has been reported in T. 12 N., R. 17 E., section 32, which is on the northeastern edge of this WSA.

Two areas, one adjacent to the WSA and one area within the WSA, are identified as having metal production. The GRA indicated that the Denver Mine located on the southeast side of the Hackberry Mountains was worked for gold, silver, copper and lead from 1911 to 1912. Assay values of .33 oz. gold, 2.0 oz. silver and 250 lbs. of lead/ton of ore were reported for this mine. Mineralization associated with the Denver Mine consists of free gold, galena (lead) and pyrite in quartz stringers in Tertiary rhyolite flow breccias related to a northeast-trending fault system in the northeast portion of the WSA. Although an area of potential for metals was essentially eliminated by cherrystemming the WSA boundary at the Denver Mine, two areas were classified as having a moderate

potential for the occurrence of silver, lead and gold in the WSA which surround the known occurrences. The larger area of moderate potential surrounds the Denver Mine adjacent to the northeast portion of the WSA. The smaller area includes an unnamed metal producer in the southeast corner of the WSA. Roughly four miles south of the Denver Mine, more than 100,000 lbs. of copper were extracted during 1926-1930 from an unnamed mine on the south end of the Hackberry Mountains (see Map 2).

A clay mine located on the southeastern side of Hackberry Mountain in the east central portion of the WSA is a past producer of industrial minerals. This deposit consists of bentonitic clay, the result of hydrothermal alteration of the rhyolitic tuffs along northeast-striking fault zones. Areas of rhyolitic volcanics in the GRA are classified as having a low potential for scattered deposits of perlite, clay, chalcedony and dimension stone. The area immediately surrounding the bentonitic clay mine is shown as a high potential for clay.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered in the Final Decision: There was no U.S. Geological Survey or Bureau of Mines mineral survey conducted for this WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. However, an open file report (OFR 85-8LA) prepared in 1985 by the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDM&G) assesses the western portion of the WSA. Two small areas in the western portion of the WSA and a larger area that includes the eastern one-third of Woods Mountains were classified as having a moderate potential for perlite. The perlite occurs either as bedded units in volcanic flows or as marginal rinds around rhyolite plugs.

There has been an ongoing high interest in exploration at the Denver Mine as evidenced by mining plans of operation filed with the BLM from 1983 to 1987. The east-central portion of the area, classified as a moderate potential for the occurrence of gold, silver and lead minerals, has been drilled by three different companies since 1982.

At the present time (January, 1988), a plan of operation is being processed for a drilling program in two areas within the WSA, one north of the Denver Mine and the other two miles southwest of the mine.

The following table summarizes unpatented mining claims recorded with the BLM as of December 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

TYPE MINING CLAIM	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	N/A	590	590	N/A	11,800	11,800
Placer	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	590	590	N/A	11,800	11,800

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Wilderness Values: Naturalness, opportunities for solitude, and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation will gradually decline over the long term as a result of projected gradually increasing OHV use and the cumulative effect of this use. This adverse impact is considered minor, since OHV use occurs in the washes and along existing primitive routes. Wilderness values would also gradually decline as a result of surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development. Current actions within existing management plans provide for conservation of sensitive resources.
2. Impact on Archaeological Resources: All proposed surface disturbing activities will be subject to environmental analysis to allow the detection of resources and the mitigation or avoidance of any impacts. Additional actions such as road closures to specific areas will lessen inadvertent impacts by the casual recreation user.
3. Impact on BLM Sensitive Plant and Wildlife Species: The proposed action will result in a negligible adverse impact. Monitoring and patrol efforts, and mitigation measures stipulated as part of any authorized activities, will assure that sensitive species receive adequate protection.
4. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Approximately 20 miles of existing primitive routes would remain open with the current annual rate of 1,000 visitor-use days projected to remain stable. Existing management plans prescribe use as limited to approved routes of travel. Off-highway vehicle use occurs primarily in the washes and along primitive routes in the lower elevations of the WSA as a result of the steep rugged terrain and the lack of existing vehicle routes within the canyon areas.
5. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for exploration and development of locatable minerals will continue to be available in areas not withdrawn in the mineralized portions comprising 40% of the WSA. These activities will be managed under the guidelines established in the EMNSA and CDCA Plans.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Several comments urged that the southern portion of the roadless area be included in the WSA for the study phase. Roads which were mentioned in public comments were rechecked and added where appropriate.
2. Study Phase: Thirty-three comments were received on this WSA. Seventeen favored wilderness designation, fifteen opposed it and one suggested that one the land 4000 feet or higher in elevation should be considered for wilderness. Comments from wilderness proponents focused on scenic, ecological, paleontological, cultural and recreation values of the WSA. Woods Mountain was described as containing a wide range of microenvironments; yucca and cactus-studded lava plateaus, deep canyons surrounded by multi-colored volcanic rocks and "garden-like" plant communities amid spectacular volcanic sites. Archaeological sites containing rock shelters and petroglyphs, desert bighorn sheep and raptor nesting sites were also mentioned.

Five respondents urged inclusion of the southern portion of the roadless area noting that neither the presence of a few grazing facilities nor the relative flatness of the terrain was sufficient to invalidate the area as wilderness. They noted that Watson, Black Canyon and Woods washes all empty across the alluvial fan channeling moisture to the area thereby supporting a variety of plant species including ephedra, several cactus species, yucca and others. A large varied animal population is also present. Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are available in this large flat expanse and the area is good for sedate forms of wilderness recreation such as day hikes, nature study, photography and rock collecting. Woods Wash contains excellent scenic, botanical, prehistoric and paleontological resources particularly the petroglyphs and the rhinoceros and oyster fossils.

The BLM was requested to not trade Southern Pacific land holdings outside the school districts which depend upon them for tax revenue. Disposal and trading of lands should proceed with consideration of local economic effect. It was also suggested that adequate parking areas be allowed at the entrances of wilderness areas.

Opponents of wilderness designation mentioned several features which they perceived as detrimental to wilderness quality including an OMNI beacon, a great number of aircraft overflights (sometimes eight/hour), small game guzzlers, ranch and grazing evidence at the periphery, dust pollution, traffic and noise from bordering roads, particularly during cattle moving season, hunting noise, and the visibility of transmission lines. Two utility companies proposed future communication sites within the unit which would require adequate buffer zones and flexible utility line corridors and access roads.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: Few comments specific to this WSA were received in response to the Draft Plan Alternatives. This WSA was opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition, a coalition of mining, rockhounding, and off-highway vehicle groups. NOC recommended a classification of moderate use for this area, which was in agreement with the Use Alternative. A large number of club members sent in letters and printed coupons supporting this position. Conservation-oriented groups, such as Wilderness Society and Sierra Club supported the Protection Alternative which proposed controlled use, or wilderness for this unit.
4. Proposed Plan: Wilderness proponents were strongly opposed to the recommendation of the Proposed Plan of limited use. A major campaign was conducted by the Wilderness Society, Sierra Club, Audubon Society and other conservation organizations to get this unit into the wilderness fold. Letters mentioned the outstanding recreational and natural values and dense concentration of archaeological sites and the lush cactus gardens of the lower elevations. A few miners or mining companies requested access to the area for mineral exploration and development.

Seven comments were received in response to the Public Input Workbook (3/15/79). Four favored wilderness protection while three wished to continue current multiple use activities. Wilderness proponents mentioned the area's scenic beauty and quiet, outstanding vegetation, particularly the "old man" cactus, the need to protect the petroglyphs, and the need for better regulation of yucca harvesting. Opponents wanted to keep the area open for rockhounding. One stated that addition of more area in the southern portion has made vehicle access inadequate.

5. 1982 Plan Amendments: During the 1982 Plan Amendment process, a proposal was considered to change the wilderness recommendation of the western portion of this WSA from nonsuitable to suitable. The amendment was rejected. The rationale was that the mineral

potential for the WSA is in the eastern part, within the Hackberry Mountains, where most motorized vehicle recreation also occurs. The Woods Mountains contain outstanding prehistoric art and natural features.

Of the 226 comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, 219 favored the amendments, six opposed and one was neutral. For the Final EIS, twelve comments were received; eleven in favor and one opposed. Proponents noted the area's fine opportunities for non-vehicular recreation, high cultural values, forests of Mojave Yucca and the high densities of golden eagles, prairie falcon, Bendire's thrasher and other rare birds and the lack of conflicting uses. Opponents gave no specific reason but said that the limited use classification was adequate for protection of sensitive resources in the Woods Mountains.

No comments were received from local governments.

Signal Hill

CDCA 272

SIGNAL HILL WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA)

(CDCA-272)

1. THE STUDY AREA —

46,084 acres

The Signal Hill WSA is located in San Bernardino County in the southeastern portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The nearest community is Needles, California located 35 miles southeast of the WSA. The WSA includes 35,693 acres of public land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1,776 acres of land belonging to the State of California and private inholdings totaling approximately 8,615 acres. No split-estate land exists within the WSA (see Map 1 and Table 1).

The west boundary of the WSA follows Lanfair Road north for four miles then intersects with a graded dirt road which forms the west boundary for roughly one mile. From here, the boundary continues north cross-country for one and one-fourth miles then east excluding the patented California Mine and other imprints of man. The boundary then follows section lines north for three and one-half miles until it intersects with a telephone line cable right-of-way which it follows east for two miles. The boundary then trends south for one and one-half miles, east for one-half mile and north for one and one-half miles, excluding the mining prospects within sections 19 and 30, T. 12 N., R. 18 E., SBEM. The north boundary then returns to the telephone cable right-of-way following it east for six miles, excluding a cherrystemmed road, until it intersects with a transmission line and maintenance road right-of-way which forms the east boundary for two miles. At this point, east boundary follows a maintained road for two miles and then heads south and southwest for six miles until it intersects with the powerline transmission road right-of-way which it follows for one mile and then cherrystems approximately two miles of road and mine workings located within sections 1 and 12, T. 10 N., R. 18 E. and section 33, T. 11 N., R. 18 E., SBEM. The south boundary then returns to the transmission line road and follows it west for two miles until it intersects with Lanfair Road on the west.

The WSA lies within the southeast portion of the 1.5 million-acre East Mojave National Scenic Area (EMNSA) designated in 1980 by the Secretary of the Interior as part of the CDCA Plan. The study area contains 35% alluvial fans, 30% pediments, 25% hills, 7% river washes and 3% plateaus. The west portion is dominated by the southern extension of the Piute Mountains and a series of small to medium sized hills with reddish brown and gray narrow canyons located in the northwestern corner. These two groups of hills are separated by the sparsely vegetated Lanfair Valley. Piute Valley comprises the east portion encompassing the remaining 40% of the acreage within the WSA.

Creosote bush is the dominant species at the lower elevations with Joshua trees occurring in the higher elevations. The dry washes support catclaw acacia, desert willow, dwarf cedar, desert almond, cheesebush, rabbit brush, and wild tobacco. The valleys accommodate stands of mesquite and other

river basin shrub and grass species. Investigations to date have not resulted in the occurrence of any BLM sensitive plants and no Federal- or State-listed rare, threatened, or endangered plants are known to occur within the study area.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Four alternatives were analyzed in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the CDCA Plan: protection, use, balanced, and no action; a summary of the area's wilderness values was included in Appendix III of the Final EIS.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE —

0	acres recommended for wilderness
35,693	BLM acres recommended for nonwilderness

No wilderness is the recommendation for this WSA. The entire acreage in this WSA is released for uses other than wilderness. This recommendation will be implemented in a manner which will use all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts. The Balanced Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative as outlined in the CDCA Plan and further explained in the California Wilderness Study Overview.

The no wilderness recommendation is based on the following rationale:

(1) the WSA does not contain any noteworthy special features and would not contribute to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System; (2) there is almost no demand for primitive recreation opportunities within this WSA; (3) the WSA possesses only marginal wilderness values; (4) large portions of the area have a high potential for one or more of the following commodities: gold, copper, silver, zinc, tungsten, vanadium, and sand and gravel; and (5) manageability as wilderness is further complicated by the presence of sizable non-Federal inholdings.

The Signal Hill WSA, while natural in character, contains no unusual features or resources, and is merely an area of undeveloped public land. Designation of this area as wilderness would not contribute to the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System. It is ecologically similar to other areas identified for wilderness designation. Within 50 miles are seven other BLM study areas recommended for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Many of these seven areas display the same ecosystem and landforms as this WSA, and also contain notable special features of scientific and general recreation and sightseeing interest. Three nearby WSAs, Fort Piute (CDCA-267), one mile north, Castle Peaks (CDCA-266), ten air miles north; and the Providence Mountains (CDCA-263), 11 air miles west, contain a combined total of over 130,000 acres which BLM is recommending for wilderness designation. All are mountainous and all contain a better representation the same type of ecosystem found within the Signal Hill WSA.

The naturalness and opportunities for solitude within this WSA only minimally meet the criteria defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. Because the study area is small and exists as an isolated ridge of public

land nearly surrounded by private property containing developments, it is difficult to escape the sights and sounds of civilization. These outside sights and sounds detract from the sense of solitude and remoteness to be experienced within the area. Considering the small size of the area, human alterations to naturalness are relatively concentrated. Although the WSA is still predominantly natural, the degree of naturalness apparent here is inferior to many locations within the three WSAs discussed above.

The WSA receives moderate recreation use (less than 500 visitor-use days annually), which is almost exclusively motorized use for rockhounding and upland game hunting. Demand for primitive recreation opportunities in this WSA is almost nonexistent. There are approximately 25 miles of routes of travel including primitive ways, washes and other unmaintained routes of access which will remain available for vehicular use. The last few years have seen a steady increase in the demands for off-highway vehicle (OHV) access along the primitive routes and washes which traverse the study area. Recreationists utilize the area for rockhounding, hunting, photography, nature study and geologic field reconnaissance. Much of the use is generated from the Los Angeles Basin and the local desert community of Needles, California, as the WSA's proximity is ideal for weekend use. Site-specific areas within the WSA are advertised in rock and gem publications and numerous groups frequent the area to collect chalcedony, agate, and opal. Rock collectors find the Miocene volcanics of Signal Hill and the Piute Mountains of particular interest as they contain a variety of good gem-cutting material. A vivid, pistachio-green common opal is found here. Milky moss and dendritic opal along with colorful red, jasp-opal are also collected. Considerable amounts of agate and chalcedony are found along the hills and ridges in the central portion of the WSA. Concerns have been expressed over the loss of vehicle access should the area be designated as wilderness.

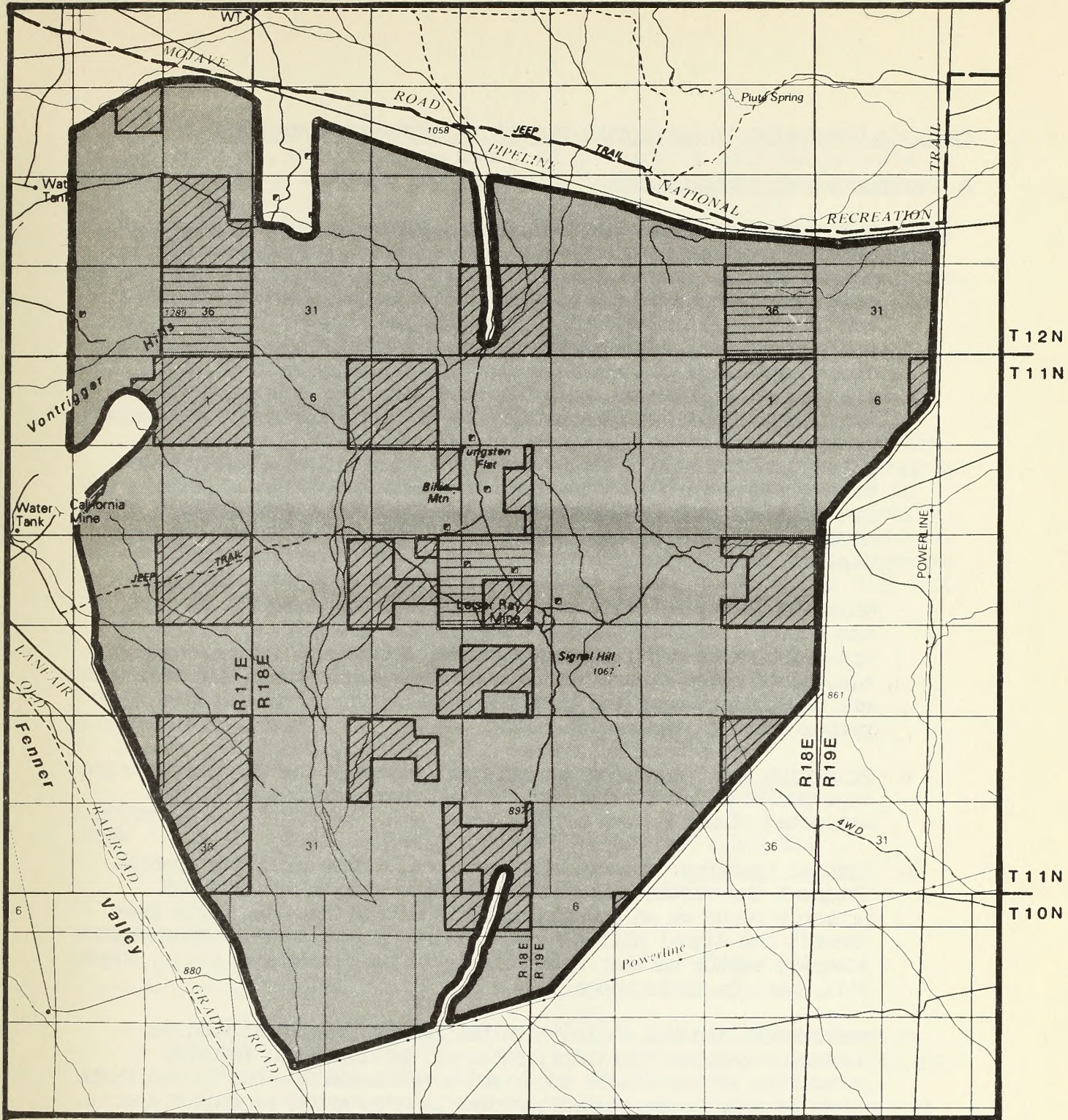
The WSA contains areas of high potential for a variety of minerals, has a long history of mining, and is presently encumbered by 70 unpatented mining claims. Although an attempt was made to exclude from the WSA mines which have been major past producers, geologic data suggests that the deposits associated with the mines extend into the WSA. In the event of wilderness designation, BLM's assessment of the WSA's mineral potential suggests that some of its claims would prove valid. Holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with development, which would make it difficult to protect wilderness values. Since the wilderness values are not notable, the WSA appears to have greater value for carefully managed mineral exploration and development than it does as wilderness.





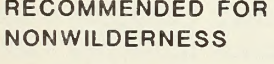


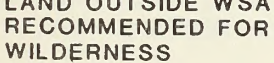
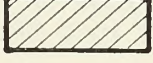
Several other factors would complicate management of this WSA as wilderness. Utility transmission facilities and support roads form portions of the south, west and north boundaries of the WSA. Maintenance of these facilities beyond the existing rights-of-way would not be allowed to continue if the Signal Hill WSA was designated wilderness. Approximately 20% of the study area is composed of non-Federal lands. This sizable acreage, consisting of numerous individual parcels, would have to be acquired to assure that uses incompatible with wilderness management do not occur.

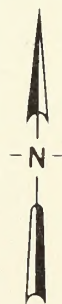
The need to protect the desert tortoise, raptor habitat, and sensitive cultural resources was recognized during the wilderness study process. The CDCA Plan calls for management of the area under low intensity, multiple use guidelines to accomplish this objective, while permitting access for mineral exploration and development. Protection of other resource values is also addressed through the implementation of management actions within the EMNSA Plan completed in 1988. These actions include requirement of a performance bond for all surface disturbing activities, additional restrictions on the use of firearms, closure of additional routes of travel and enforcement of stringent visual resource management guidelines to control the level of disturbance allowed in sensitive areas. Together, these actions serve to lessen potential adverse impacts to the area.

TABLE 1 - Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area

<u>Within Wilderness Study Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	35,693
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings		
State		1,776
Private		8,615
Total		<u>46,084</u>
<u>Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(within WSA)	0
BLM	(outside WSA)	0
Split Estate	(within WSA)	0
Split Estate	(outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness		<u>0</u>
Inholdings		
State		0
Private		0
<u>Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness</u>		<u>Acres</u>
BLM	(surface and subsurface)	35,693
Split Estate	(BLM surface only)	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness		<u>35,693</u>



- | | | | | | |
|--|------|---|---|---|--------------|
|  | NONE |  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | |  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE |
|  | |  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | PRIVATE |



**Signal Hill
Proposal
MAP-1**



3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Wilderness Characteristics

1. Naturalness: Evidence of motorized vehicle activity can be found near the boundaries of the WSA and throughout the many washes and trails within. One trail runs through the heart of the WSA from the northern to the southern boundary. The majority of the 25 miles of routes are utilized by rock collectors and hunters. Other signs of man's presence include mining claim markers, abandoned mines and a loose network of old mining access routes. Roughly 2,500 acres along the eastern portion of the study area have been contaminated by unexploded military ordnance, a remnant of World War II maneuvers.
2. Solitude: The area's topographic variation and relatively dense vegetation combine to allow opportunities for solitude, despite the area's small size. However, because of the area's small size it is difficult to escape outside sights and sounds, which reduce the feeling of remoteness.

This WSA is periodically overflowed by military aircraft as part of the national defense mission taking place in approved military operating areas and flight corridors. The visual intrusions and associated noise create periodic temporary effects on solitude which are deemed necessary and acceptable as a part of the defense preparedness of the nation.

3. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Although the WSA does provide opportunities for a primitive recreational experience, it has attracted almost no use of this type.
4. Special Features: Desert bighorn sheep, a BLM sensitive species, frequent the northern Piute Mountains outside of the WSA and probably occur on an occasional basis within the WSA. Mule deer inhabit the Signal Hill WSA, but again, only on an infrequent basis. Adequate raptor habitat is available in the Vontrigger Hills, Signal Hill, and the Piute Range.

Portions of the WSA fall within the Fenner/Chemehuevi Valleys Habitat Management Area designated in the CDCA Plan for the protection of the desert tortoise, a protected species in the State of California. The desert tortoise is also a BLM sensitive species and is currently under status review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for listing as a threatened species. Population densities range as high as 100 to 250 individuals per square mile in Fenner Valley and probably range as high as 100 per square mile in WSA 272, particularly at the south end.

The WSA encompasses two areas of high cultural resource sensitivity. A third area of very high sensitivity includes numerous temporary camp sites and high concentrations of rock art, both petroglyphs (pecked, scratched, or grooved into the rock surface) and

pictographs (painted on). Few areas have been systematically surveyed, and the known record of prehistoric land use patterns in the region suggests some potential for sites yet to be discovered.

Sacred and ritual hawk and eagle feather collection areas are used by present day Native Americans (Mohave). Chemehuevi informants have indicated that they currently employ the eastern portion of the WSA for food gathering, medicine, and craft materials. An aboriginal trail network crosses the WSA.

B. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

1. Assessing the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems: This WSA contains 35,693 acres of the American Desert/Creosote Bush ecosystem. The landform and ecosystem typified in the Signal Hill WSA are already well represented in other areas identified for wilderness preservation. Geologically and ecologically similar are BLM's Fort Piute, Providence Mountain and Castle Peaks WSA's, all recommended as suitable for wilderness designation and all within a one-hour drive of the Signal Hill WSA.

Table 2 - Ecosystem Representation

<u>Bailey-Kuchler Classification Domain/Province/PNV</u>	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>NATIONWIDE</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	117	4,232,216
<u>CALIFORNIA</u>				
American Desert/Creosote Bush	1	343,753	88	3,618,412

2. Expanding the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a days driving time (five hours) of major population centers: The WSA is within a five-hour drive of five major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3
Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers

<u>Population Centers</u>	<u>NWPS areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>	<u>areas</u>	<u>acres</u>
<u>California</u>				
Anaheim-Santa Ana	25	2,823,534	153	5,703,616
Bakersfield	32	4,071,358	128	3,998,548
Los Angeles-Long Beach	27	2,876,234	135	4,989,751
Riverside-San Bernardino	22	2,031,054	205	7,658,649
<u>Nevada</u>				
Las Vegas	46	3,507,293	311	11,186,463

3. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas:

The WSA is within 50 air miles of seven BLM WSAs recommended for wilderness designation. The closest designated wilderness area is Joshua Tree National Monument, managed by the National Park Service, 180 miles southwest of the WSA.

C. Manageability

The Signal Hill WSA is manageable as wilderness. However, two significant issues would complicate management of the area: large zones of high mineral potential coupled with a large number of mining claims and a high percentage of non-Federal inholdings.

The WSA contains areas of high potential for a variety of minerals, and is presently encumbered by 70 unpatented mining claims. Although wilderness designation would withdraw the area from claim location, BLM's assessment of the area's mineral potential suggests that some of the existing claims would prove valid. Holders of valid claims would be able to proceed with developments deemed necessary or reasonably incidental to their mining operation, subject only to not causing unnecessary or undue degradation. Development would significantly alter natural conditions at the site, and potentially disrupt opportunities for solitude over a much greater area.

Approximately 20% of the WSA is composed of non-Federal lands. This sizable acreage, consisting of numerous individual parcels, would have to be acquired to assure that uses incompatible with wilderness management do not occur. The San Bernardino County General Plan designates it as Rural Conservation. Zoning is Desert Living which would permit one residence on 40 acres. Under County planning guidance several hundred private parcels could be created with allowable uses ranging from residential to industrial or commercial.

The area is a favored rockhounding area. Specimens from the area are some of the finest in the CDCA and historical use includes vehicle access to traditional use areas. There are also good opportunities for hunting of dove, quail, and chukar. Enforcement of a vehicle closure would require constant supervision because of these traditional use patterns.

Military overflights in this WSA must be considered to maintain the integrity of the existing and future national defense mission as well as the wilderness resource.

D. Energy and Mineral Resource Values

1. Summary of Information Known At the Time of the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation: The Signal Hill WSA is located in the BLM Homer Mountain Geology-Energy-Mineral (G-E-M) Resource Area (GRA). The G-E-M data in the wilderness portion of the CDCA Plan EIS (Volume B, Appendix III) in 1980 indicated that the WSA has a potential for the occurrence of copper, lead, silver, gold, and a lesser potential for molybdenum and thorium. During World War I, there was prospecting for tungsten. The Leiser Ray Mine in the center of the WSA produced about 13,600 pounds of copper, 960 pounds of lead, and 400 ounces of silver during the 1890's and during World War I. The mine was also known to contain gold and vanadium. There were three gold mines, in addition to the California mine in the Vontrigger Hills, but the disturbed areas surrounding these mines have been excluded from the western portion of the WSA. The California Mine produced 441,444 pounds of copper, 39,860 ounces of silver, and 352 ounces of gold during the period from 1926 to 1929 and 1944 and 1945. The mine was also determined to have anomalous gamma-ray readings for thorium. Geochemical anomalies were noted for niobium, cerium, chromium, cobalt, vanadium, zinc, tin, and molybdenum. A remote sensing analysis suggested some potential for a porphyry type copper deposit in the WSA. The 1980 GRA file generally supports the statements on mineral potential in the EIS, but indicates further mineralization and mining activity in the WSA. At the northernmost extension of the Von Trigger Hills, there are numerous prospect pits and shallow shafts. This area, now known as

the Rattlesnake Mine in the Rattlesnake Gold Mining District, and has been the location of sporadic gold mining activity since the late 19th century. The gold occurs as microscopic or very fine grains in a Precambrian metamorphic rock complex.

A northeast trending zone, between the California Mine (located in the California Mining District) and the Rattlesnake Mine areas, is shown on the mineral occurrence potential map with a high potential for gold, copper, and silver, as outlined in the Homer Mountain GRA report.

An area in the central part of the WSA (north of Signal Hill) was identified in the GRA as having a high potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, copper, zinc and vanadium as shown on the accompanying mineral potential map. This area includes many prospect pits and mine shafts from Tungsten Flat on the north to the vicinity of the Leiser Ray Mine and Signal Hill on the south.

The GRA file also indicates that there is a high occurrence potential for sand and gravel in an alluvial channel extending from the north central to the south central portion of the WSA. The GRA file data showed no evidence to support the 1980 EIS statement concerning the presence of lead, molybdenum, and thorium.

2. Summary of Significant New Mineral Resource Data Collected Since the Preliminary Suitability Recommendation Which Should Be Considered In the Final Decision: There was no U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) or U.S. Bureau of Mines (BOM) mineral surveys conducted for this WSA because it is recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. However, the California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) has completed a preliminary land classification in 1984 of the Lanfair Valley, Homer Mountain and Davis Dam quadrangles and published the results in an Open File Report (OFR) 84-30 SAC).

The CDMG report supports the BLM GRA file and EIS data. However, in addition to the presence of gold, silver, and copper identified in the BLM GRA file, the CDMG report indicated the presence of tungsten in the central part of the WSA. Therefore, a high potential for the occurrence of tungsten was added to the classification rating for the WSA as shown on the accompanying mineral potential map. Production of tungsten took place in the Tungsten Flat area in the early 1900's. The only recorded production occurred in 1914 when 20 pounds of tungsten concentrates were produced by nine small operators (USGS, Branch of Resource Analysis, 1979). Never the less, most of the mineralized quartz veins were worked in some degree as evidenced by over sixty prospect pits or small mine workings. Roughly 40% of the surface area in this WSA is classified as having some potential for mineral occurrence.

As of December, 1987, no mining or exploration plans had been filed with the BLM in this WSA.

The following table summarizes unpatented mining claims recorded with the BLM as of December, 1987.

Table 4 - Mining Claims

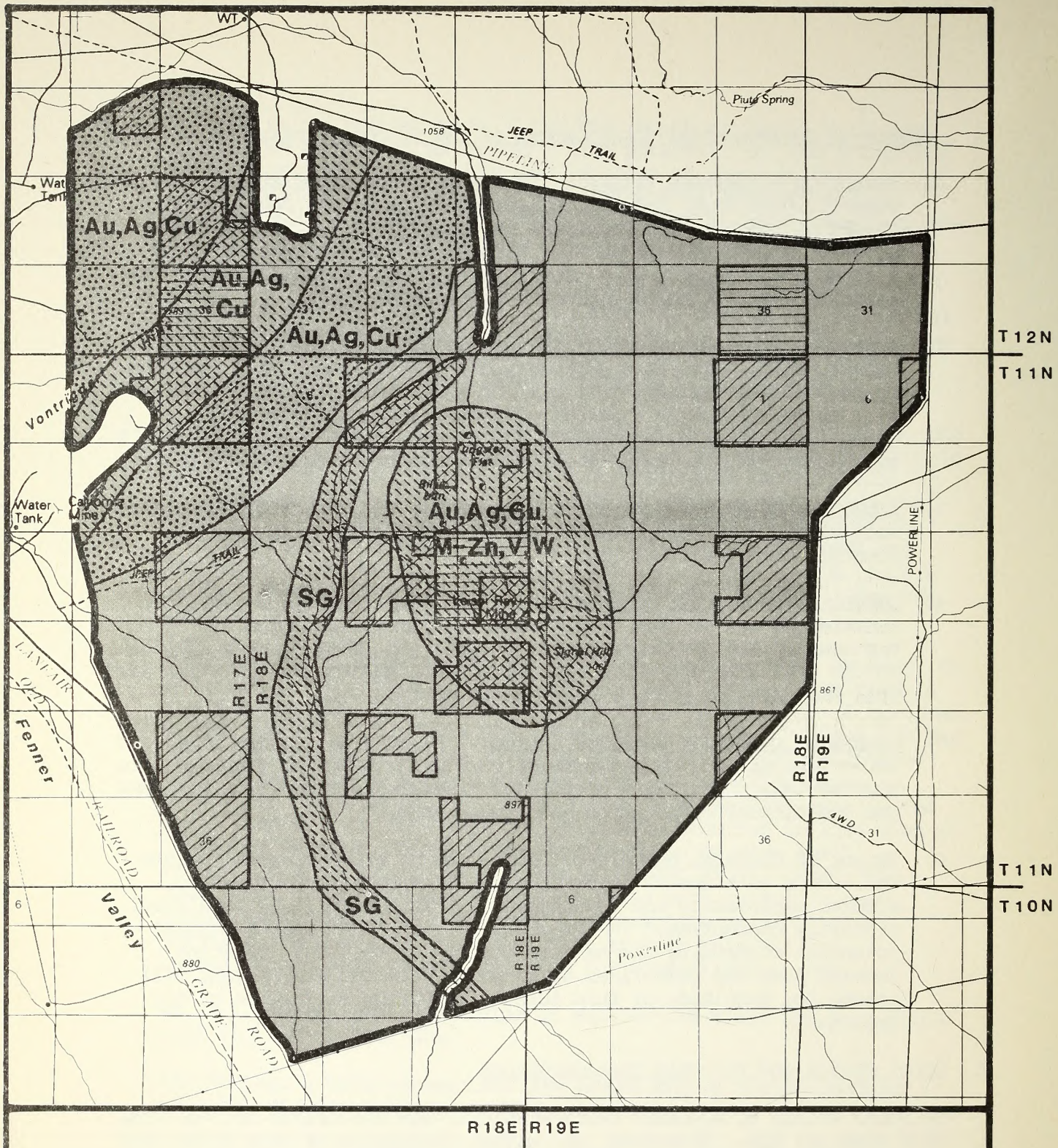
TYPE MINING CLAIM	NUMBER			ACRES		
	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL	SUITABLE	NONSUIT.	TOTAL
Lode	N/A	56	56	N/A	1120	1120
Placer	N/A	14	14	N/A	560	560
Mill Site	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
Total	N/A	70	70	N/A	1680	1680

E. Summary of Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action

1. Impact on Wilderness Values: There will be no immediate adverse impact. Over time, existing wilderness values will decline as a result of the projected increase in visitors utilizing OHV's for access. Wilderness values will also experience moderate adverse site-specific impacts as a result of noise and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development.
2. Impact on Locatable Mineral Exploration and Development: Opportunities for future exploration and development will continue to be available subject to a plan of operations. Mining activities will be restricted as a result of regulations and management guidelines outlined in the CDCA and EMNSA Plans which limit vehicle access and mitigate adverse effects on sensitive resource values.
3. Impact on Motorized Recreation Use Levels: Motorized recreation use will continue on designated routes of travel within the WSA as identified in the EMNSA Plan.
4. Impact on Desert Tortoise Habitat: Localized impacts caused by vehicle use and surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development will be moderate. Management guidelines in the CDCA Plan and EMNSA Plan along with enforcement of State laws will help provide protection of this species.
5. Impact on Sensitive Wildlife Habitat: Impacts to bighorn sheep and their habitat will be negligible, consisting of minor site-specific habitat loss as a result of surface disturbance associated with OHV use and mineral exploration and development.
6. Impact on Cultural Resources: Some loss of archaeological values will occur as a result of surface disturbance associated with mineral exploration and development. This loss will be localized, primarily concentrated in the areas of high and moderate mineral potential comprising the eastern portion of the WSA. Existing Federal laws and guidelines outlined in CDCA and EMNSA Plans will lessen the magnitude of this loss by requiring mitigation of any impacts.

F. Local Social and Economic Considerations

No local social or economic considerations were identified in the Final CDCA Plan and EIS. Therefore, no further discussion of this topic will occur in this document.



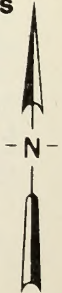
- NONE** Recommended for Wilderness
- Recommended for Non Wilderness
- Land outside WSA Recommended for Wilderness
- Split Estate
- State
- Private

Explanation

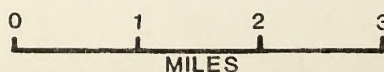
- High Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- Moderate Potential for the Occurrence of Energy and/or Non-energy Minerals
- M Moderate Mineral Potential Location in a High Mineral Potential Area
- H High Mineral Potential Location in a Moderate Mineral Potential Area

Commodity Symbols

- Ag Silver
- Au Gold
- Cu Copper
- SG Sand & Gravel
- V Vanadium
- W Tungsten
- Zn Zinc



Signal Hill
Mineral Resource Potential



MAP-2
CDCA-272

G. Summary of WSA - Specific Public Comments

Public comments were solicited throughout all phases in the development of the CDCA Plan, finalized in 1980. Issues raised by the public during the Inventory and Study Phase were taken into account during development of the Draft Plan Alternatives and Proposed Plan. The following is a summary of all comments received. Inaccuracies that are known to exist are noted in parentheses.

1. Inventory Phase: Most of the public comments stated that the area had many features which detract from wilderness quality, particularly additional roads and ways. After further field checks, changes were made where appropriate.
2. Study Phase: Of the sixteen comments received on this WSA, twelve preferred continuance of multiple use management in this unit, while four favored further wilderness consideration. Five respondents wanted assurance that mineral development and rockhounding would be permitted. Minerals said to be present were copper, gold, silver, tungsten and possibly uranium. Rockhounds were interested in opalite, flame agate, jasper and nodules in ash. Exploration and development of oil, gas and geothermal resources were also a concern of one oil company.

The remainder of the comments opposing wilderness listed features which were perceived as detracting from wilderness quality. These included an OMNI beacon, powerlines, overflight of military aircraft, noise from Lanfair road which serves as a border for the WSA, evidence of mining, grazing and roads which serve these uses. All of these factors were said to invalidate the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation which should be provided by a wilderness area. One respondent listed the following types of recreation available in the area: hunting, four-wheel driving, camping, motorcycling, rockhounding and photography.

Comments favoring wilderness designation for this WSA noted that the area is almost pristine and provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. This is an excellent area for nature study. One respondent listed many varieties of vegetation found here. One complained of ecological damage caused by grazing and by harvesting of Mojave yucca.

Three additional letters were received in response to the Public Input Workbook. One was from a harvester of Mojave Yucca, who listed reasons why this activity was compatible in this region. A second argued that yucca harvesting should not be allowed citing that there are plenty of areas outside WSA's for harvesting. A third wanted to retain access to a water tank.

3. Draft Plan Alternatives: There were few comments specific to this WSA. This was one of those opposed by the National Outdoor Coalition (NOC), a coalition of mining, rockhounding and off-highway

vehicle organizations. A large number of club members sent in printed coupons supporting a multiple use classification of moderate use for this area. This was in agreement with the recommendation of the Use Alternative. Conservation-oriented individuals and organizations approved the Protection Alternative which recommended wilderness designation for this area.

4. Proposed Plan: The proposed plan recommended a classification of Limited use. This was not entirely satisfactory to either the motorized groups or the conservation groups. However, there were few comments specifically mentioning this particular WSA.

No comments were received from local governments.

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